

The
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Submitting Material for Publication

We encourage our readers to consider submitting material on early North American numismatics to *CNL* for publication. In general, this includes coins, tokens, paper money, and medals that were current before the U.S. Federal Mint began operations in 1793. However, there are certain pieces produced after the 1793 date that have traditionally been considered part of pre-Federal numismatics and should be included. We cover all aspects of study regarding the manufacture and use of these items. Our very knowledgeable and friendly staff will assist potential authors to finalize submissions by providing advice concerning the text and help with illustrations. Submissions in either electronic or hard copy format, should be sent to the editor via the e-mail address given above or through the ANS at their postal address. Electronic text submissions should be formatted in Word with separate grayscale images.



Editorial

August has been an exciting month for Colonial numismatic literature. At the recent Chicago ANA show, the Numismatic Literary Guild (NLG) unveiled the winners of the 2014 NLG Writers' Awards (full list at <http://www.nlgonline.org/awards/annual-writers-competition/2014-annual-nlg-writers-awards/>). Included in the winner's circle were books by authors who will be well known to most long-time readers of *The Colonial Newsletter*. Roger Siboni, Jack Howes, and Buell Ish won Best Specialized book in the United States Coins category for *New Jersey State Coppers* and Philip Mossman was given the prize for *Extraordinary Merit for From Crime to Punishment—Counterfeit and Debased Currencies in Colonial and Pre-Federal America* (both books still available for order online at <http://numismatics.org/Store/NewJersey> and <http://numismatics.org/Store/NS27>, respectively). Congratulations to all for these important contributions to Colonial numismatics.

Following on the coattails of these award-winners, CNL-155 offers some new articles by authors who should also be well-known to readers. Roger Moore and Robert Bowser present a previously unpublished British

counterfeit halfpenny Family, which has been christened the Ogle Eye Family. This Family is particularly notable for the muling of its dies with those from other published and unpublished counterfeit Families.

In this issue we are pleased to introduce an article on the controversial Blacksmith (or is it?) copper known as Wood 33 by Jim Biancarosa. Although Jim has previously contributed to counterfeit articles by Roger Moore, this is his first stand-alone piece for *The Colonial Newsletter*. Taking a close look at Wood 33 and informed by his background in the arts, Jim offers a re-reading of the legends and the types in an effort to win support for an origin in Vermont. The illustration above reproduces an original oil painting by the author that exhibits both his artistic skill and visually expresses his views on Wood 33.

A concluding article by your humble editor assembles metrological data for Blacksmith coppers by Wood variety and offers suggestions as to what we may glean from it.

As summer fades into autumn, many readers will be looking ahead to the Whitman Expo and the Annual C4 Convention in Baltimore

at the end of October. There is reason for extra excitement this year since the American Numismatic Society and the Colonial Coin Collectors Club have joined forces to put on a new Stack Family Coinage of the Americas Conference (COAC) on October 30, 2014, dealing with the subject of "Circulating Coinage in Pre-Federal America."

This program, for ANS and C4 Members only, is generously funded by C4 and the Stack Family Fund at the American Numismatic Society.

The speakers (all past *CNL* authors) and their topics are:

Oliver Hoover—"Coins of our Forefathers: The Circulating Money of North America before 1780"

Chris Salmon—"The Silver Coins of Massachusetts: Evolution of Minting Techniques"

Jack Howes—"Thomas Machin: The Man and his Coinage"

John Kraljevich—"World Coins that Circulated in Colonial America: Sources and Methods"

Full details and registration information are available online at <http://numismatics.org/Events/COAC>.

With all of this in mind, please sit back and enjoy the offerings in the present issue of *The Colonial Newsletter*.

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OGLE EYE:
A FAMILY OF BRITISH COUNTERFEIT HALFPENCE
by
Roger Moore, MD; Moorestown, NJ, and Robert L. Bowser; Hudson, OH

Introduction

The study of British and Irish counterfeit halfpence has been advanced with the division of the numerous varieties of these coins into smaller groupings called Families based on die pairing, sharing of letter and device punches, and style similarities in die elements.¹ Previously, Robert Bowser uncovered the first definitive evidence that a specific Family of counterfeit halfpence had been minted in London.² The Family in question consisted of a copper halfpenny obverse die with a portrait of King George III on the obverse marred by spalling (die deterioration) on the king's face, and a 1748-dated Britannia on the reverse. Due to the obverse spalling, which resembled a bubble gum balloon that had popped over the king's face, the Family was called the Bubble Gum Face Family (BF). Documentation for this Family was found in the descriptive testimony records of a constable in a trial transcript before a justice of London's "Old Bailey" criminal court. These records are available on the internet at www.oldbaileyonline.org.³ Of interest here, the same 1748 reverses used for the Bubble Gum Face Family were also paired with obverses with a King George II head-left portrait distinguished by an odd "ogling eye." This paper explores the Family of coins with the King George II Ogle Eye obverses, as well as the multiple style and date mules that exist, including those involving the King George III Bubble Gum Face Family. Although connected through die pairing, the Bubble Gum Face and Ogle Eye Families were likely coined by different counterfeiting operations. The Ogle Eye Family was probably minted first and then later some of the reverse dies were brought back into service around 1796, after they were acquired by the defendants discussed in the Court proceedings cited above.⁴ The numerous other muled varieties using Ogle Eye obverses were also probably coined following the core 1748 dated Ogle Eye Family members, since the reverse muled dies are generally deteriorated and worn.

Nomenclature

Before exploring the characteristics of the Ogle Eye Family some discussion concerning the way the obverses and reverse are labeled needs to occur. The treatment of the core Family members, meaning those with both an obverse and a reverse that fit into the characteristics of the Ogle Eye Family, is fairly straightforward. The obverses are assigned a number and the reverses a letter. Somewhat problematic is that in a previous paper dealing with the Bubble Gum Face Family,⁵ muled Ogle Eye Family members were labeled with numbers and letters that do not fit perfectly into the now expanded Ogle Eye Family. However, if the authors were to change the letter/number designations that were previously assigned, this could cause significant confusion for future collectors, with the same variety assigned different letters and numbers in two different papers. For the sake of consistency the authors have elected to

1 C. Schettino, B. Weston, J. Spilman, and G. Trudgen, *The Categorization of Counterfeit British & Irish 1/2d & 1/4d of George II & III—A Preliminary Progress Report on Family Groups & Subgroups* (The Colonial Newsletter Foundation, Inc, 2002).

2 B. Bowser, "1748-dated Counterfeit British Halfpenny Source Identified," *The Colonial Newsletter* 135 (December 2007): 3207–3213.

3 The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, www.oldbaileyonline.org, reference number t-17960914-86, September 19, 1796.

4 Bowser, *op. cit.*

5 R. Bowser and G. Trudgen, "Die State Study of the 'Bubble Gum' Obverse Die," *Colonial Coin Collectors Club Newsletter* 16.4 (Winter 2008): 24–26.

preserve the original letter/number system here, although the Ogle Eye Family plates may not flow in an entirely logical manner.

Perhaps more important is a discussion of how mules are treated in this paper. A mule is simply a coin that has a mismatched obverse and reverse. Various types of mules exist. Date mules pair the head of the king with a reverse date that belongs to a different reign. For instance King George II may appear on the obverse but the coin is a date mule if a date belonging to the reign of King George III (like 1770–1775) is found on the reverse. Similarly, there are style mules where the obverse of a coin may belong to one Family while the reverse comes from another. The proper labeling has been a key area of discussion and disagreement within the internet-based Non-Regal Research Group (nonregalresearch@yahoogroups.com). However, simply assigning a Family letter or number to a mule occurring within a Family would be exceedingly misleading as other Families are fleshed out. By just assigning a letter or number to a muled side of a coin would give that muled side equal weight in regard to being a Family member as a core member of the Family and would make it confusing when that muled side is found in other Families with different numbers or letters. Another possible approach that was rejected by the authors was to leave all muled sides without any designation. However, the lack of identification of the non-Family member muled side would also be very confusing, since there would be: 1) no easy way to refer to the muled side of the coin in any particular Family; 2) no easy way to identify a die that had been used in multiple Families when the dies from different Families were used in the same counterfeiting operation; 3) no way to begin to understand how a particular die might have traveled to different minting operations and how these minting operations were related.

The authors have chosen a labeling method that will identify an Ogle Eye variety that is a mule but will allow further definition of the primary Family from which the mule arises. This method has been used previously to describe mules in another counterfeit halfpence Family.⁶ If the obverse of a variety is a mule, on the plate the side will be labeled OG for Ogle Eye but then have a number placed in parenthesis starting with the number one. In the body of the paper each mule will be discussed in regard to its primary Family (if known), so that when a core Family letter/number is assigned, the coin will still retain the designation of the original Family. A perfect example of how this is done is shown in Figure 3b, below, where the Bubble Gum Face Family member—BF1 (originally designated as such by Bowser)—is labeled here as OE(1), indicating that it is the first obverse mule in the Ogle Eye Family. The full designation of the obverse is therefore BF1/OE(1). Similarly, reverse mules are labeled first with the OE designation followed by the last two letters of the date and finally followed by a small letter indicating to which mule from that year it has been assigned. Looking at Figure 3a, below, one can see the reverse labeled 71a. This reverse is from an unpublished Family called the Faceless George Family. It is still being defined by Eugene Andrews.⁷ Therefore this reverse has been designated OE71a/FG71xx here. This means that the reverse relationship with the Ogle Eye Family has been defined by the OE, the year by 71, and the mule status by the small a. The reverse is further defined by its primary Family—the Faceless George Family—using FG. Since the Family has not been finalized and since the letter that will be assigned to that reverse in the Faceless George Family is not yet certain, the XX designation has been used.

By using this approach the authors preserve the integrity of the labeling system for the pure Family members but allow acknowledgement of the mules in a defined way which can carry over into the mule's primary Family as well as any other Families in which that die might have been used. The value of this is that the same reverse might eventually be found to have been

⁶ R. Moore, "Capped Head: A Family of Counterfeit Halfpence," *The Colonial Newsletter* 151 (April 2013): 4006–4011.

⁷ Personal email communication.

used in two or three other Families. The additional Family designations can be added as they are discovered, thereby allowing a picture of the cross minting of Families to be more clearly defined, and the ability to make relational determinations of common minting operations easier in the future.

Core Ogle Eye Family Members

The Ogle Eye Family is primarily distinguished by the treatment of the obverse central device and the 1748-dated reverse. Nine different obverse dies have been identified and some have very subtle differences between one another. Six reverses dated 1748 make up the core Family (Fig. 1). In addition, numerous die combinations exist in which obverse dies from the Ogle Eye Family are combined with reverse dies from other Families with various dates. These will be discussed further in the section on mules. Finally, three brockages are known of core Ogle Eye Family members. Two are obverse brockages involving OE1 and OE9. Interestingly, the OE9 obverse has not been found paired with an Ogle Eye Family member reverse and has only been found as a brockage or muled with a reverse from another Family. There is a single reverse brockage of OE48A. The varieties of the core Family with brockages are illustrated in Figure 1 (below) and examples of the actual brockage coins are shown in Figure 2 (below).

Obverses: King George II facing left is standard for all Ogle Eye obverses. The diagnostic feature that ties these obverses together as a Family is the deeply-recessed eye socket area reaching down to the mouth and the obtuse angulation where the bridge of the nose and the brow meet. The nose also is slightly turned up. In addition, the lower lip of King George II is prominent and protrudes more than the upper lip, making it look like he has an underbite and a slight grin. There is no bow in the back of the hair and the ribbons are long and crenate. One of the best diagnostics differentiating one obverse die from another is the position of the ribbon ends in relationship to the legends. The mail worn by King George II is strong with fully struck breast plates observable on higher grade examples. The letter-punches used to make all the obverse dies seem to have been the same and employ small, well-spaced lettering. The ordinal numerals are all small and stubby. Another important tool for differentiating one variety from another is the relationship of the ordinal numerals to each other and to King George's head. There are two or three punctuation dots depending on the variety and careful comparison of the locations of these dots aids immensely in making an attribution.

Reverses: Reverses of the core family show striking uniformity in the treatment of Britannia, especially with respect to the shape of her body and head. The shields are rounded and not engraved with lines. A separate sprig-arm punch was probably utilized and the sprig details vary. The arm position in relationship to the legend is critical for reverse variety attribution. The legends were made by small, thin, and well-constructed letter-punches. Denticles do not seem to be present on even high-grade examples. Perhaps the most important feature for distinguishing one variety from another is the specific characteristics of the sprig. Since many of the specimens that have survived are lower grade, determining the precise variety can be a challenge.

Mules of the Ogle Eye Family

The number of coins in the Ogle Eye group that are core Family members and were accessible to the authors (49 in total) exceeds the number of mules by only a relatively small number (36 in total) (see Table 1, below). A key question to ask is how the muled dies got into the Ogle Eye minting operation? One possibility is that the obverse and reverse dies of the core Ogle Eye Family were sold to another counterfeiting organization. This seems unlikely since there are at least six Families represented by the various mule dies and the probability that all these

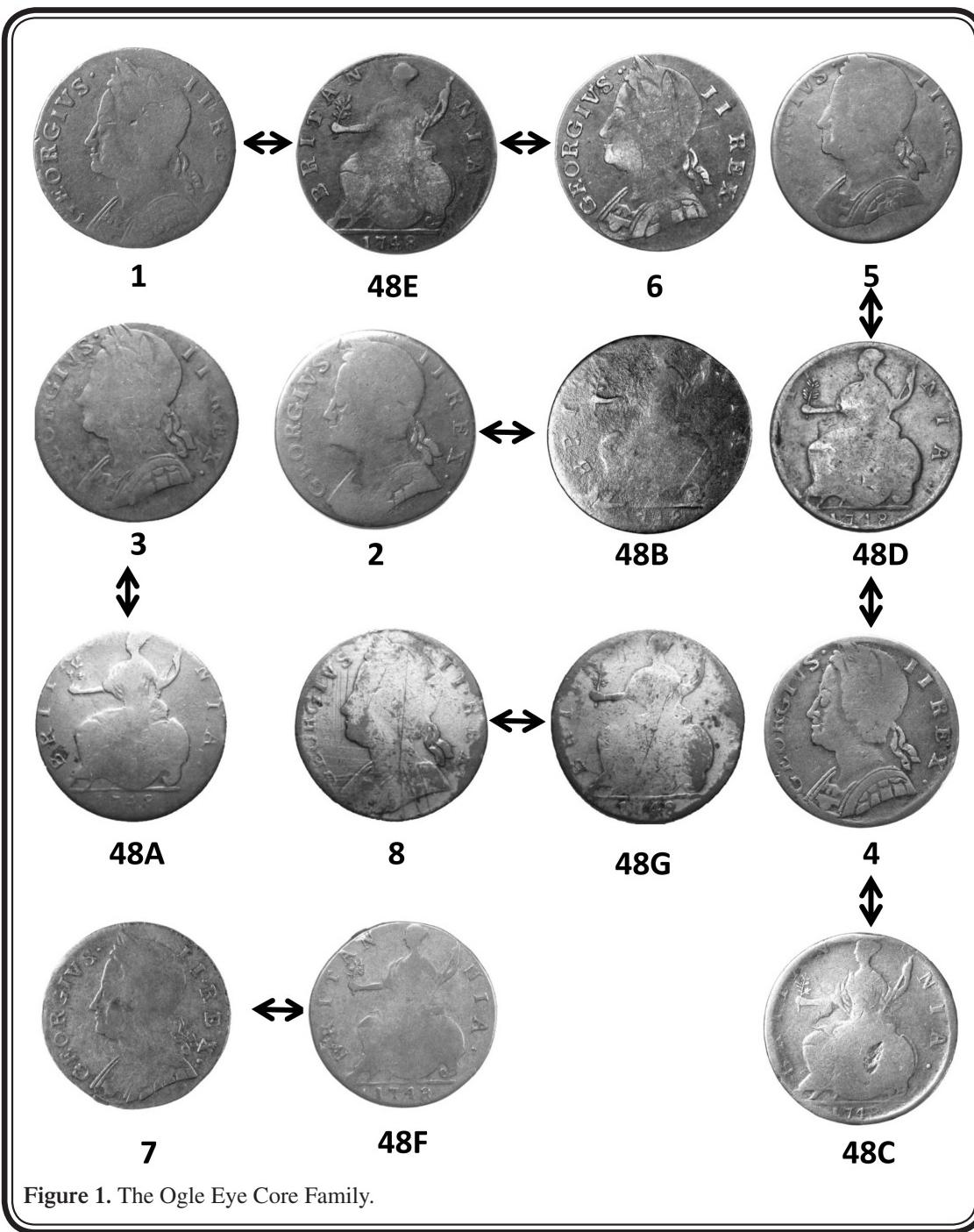


Figure 1. The Ogle Eye Core Family.

Families belonged to a single minting operation is low. However, all the Families would have had to be in a single minting operation, if this hypothesis is correct, since all the Ogle Eye core Family and the mules are interconnected directly by die sharing, except for the two core Family members OE7-OE48F and OE8-OE48G. (see Fig. 3a-c). Such die sharing would have been impossible if the Ogle Eye dies were distributed to a number of counterfeiting operations.

Alternatively, the possibility exists that the same organization producing the Ogle Eye dies

went on to make the dies for the many other Families represented by the mules. This is also improbable since it is doubtful that the same minting operation would be so widely involved in making dies for so many different Families which stretched over such a wide range of dates from 1738 to 1775. In addition, all of the mule dies show wear and deterioration, indicating that when muled with Ogle Eye dies, they were near the end of their useful life.

The most probable scenario was the old, worn mule dies were brought into the Ogle Eye minting organization from defunct counterfeiting operations or from stores of minting equipment confiscated by London constables to produce the mule variants. The dies could have been collected from numerous sources and intermixed with the dies made by the Ogle

Eye die cutters. It is difficult to determine when in the minting sequence the mule dies entered into the minting operation since there is extensive die sharing between the core Family and the mules. However, it would seem that the mule dies were employed early on in the minting process. The best way to determine this would be an evaluation of die deterioration with core Family members and mules, but very few of the coins in either the core Family or the mules have survived into modern times. For the coins that did survive, the condition of most is low grade making such evaluations difficult. One consistency found both in the core Family and the mules is the low weight planchets used in the minting of all the coins. The seven reverse mules will be discussed by date with further division by Family. The two obverse mules will be discussed by Family.



Figure 2. Ogle Eye Family brockages.

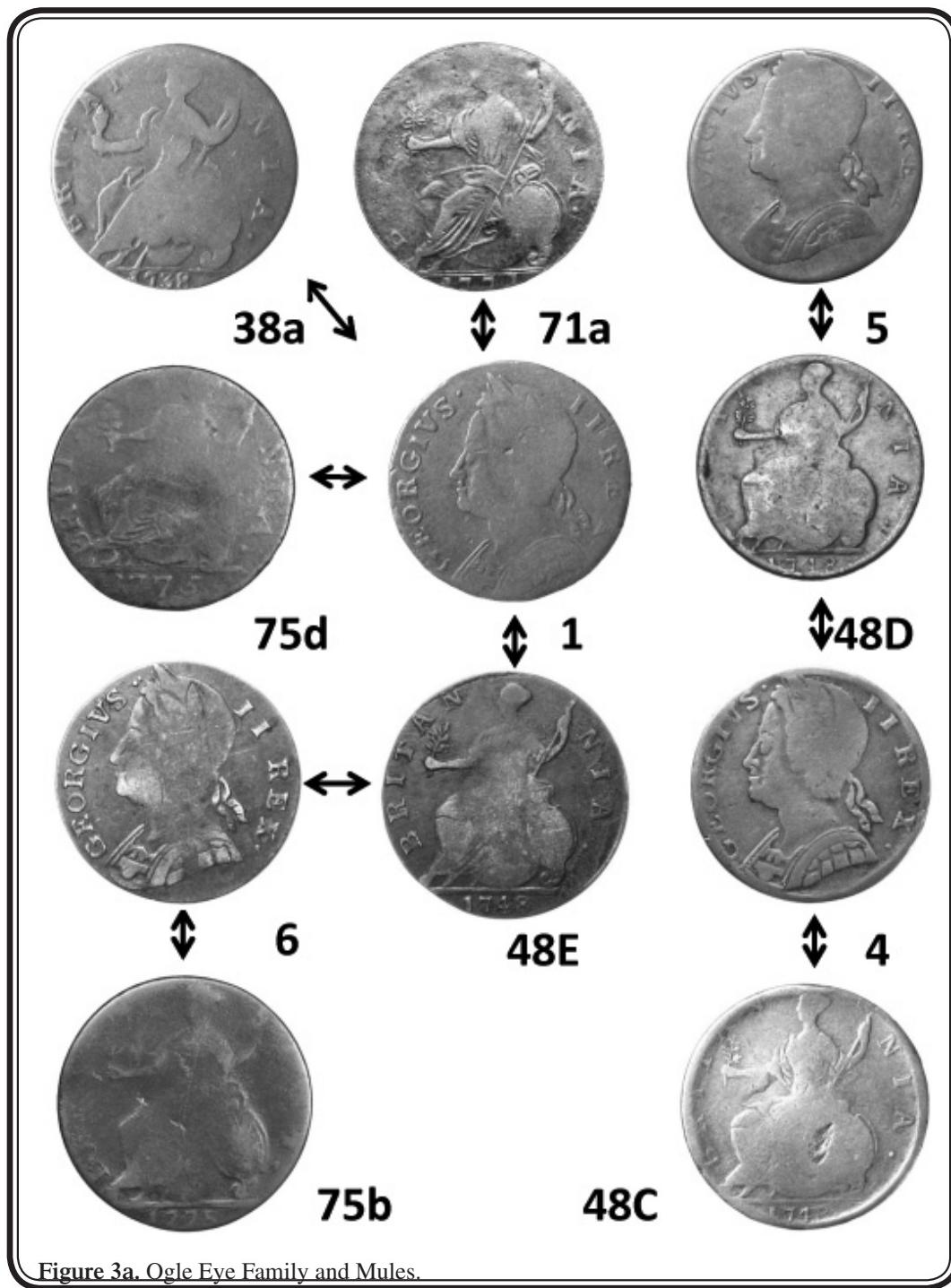


Figure 3a. Ogle Eye Family and Mules.

Reverse Mules

There is one 1738-dated reverse mule, one 1771-dated reverse mule, and five 1775-dated reverse mule dies paired with Ogle Eye obverse dies.

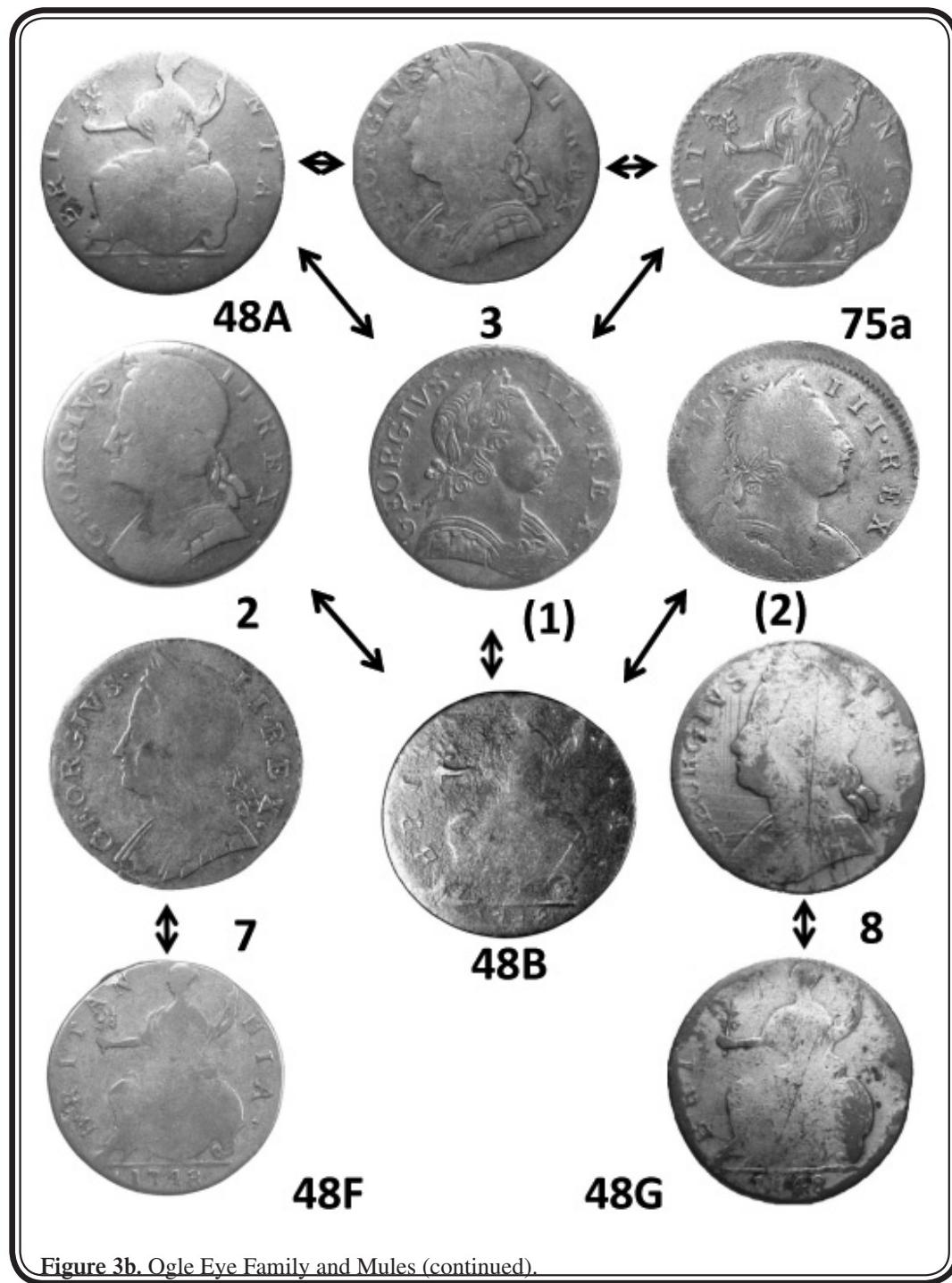


Figure 3b. Ogle Eye Family and Mules (continued).

1738—Flat Struck Mule. The most common mule presently known is the 1738-dated reverse. When this Family was first studied and few mules were found, it was named the 1738/1748 Family. However, as more core Family members and mules appeared with a variety of dates, it became evident that there was little similarity between the 1738 reverse and the core 1748 Family reverses. Since progress has been made in determining other Families of Counterfeit halfpence, the 1738 reverse has tentatively been placed in the not yet fully defined Flat Struck Family.

The 1738 mules are distinguished from the other mules in that they are not only more numerous, but they have survived in higher grade. The 1738 reverse is muled only to the OE1 obverse core Family member, which is promiscuous in that it is also paired with three other mule reverse dies (OE71a, OE75b, and OE75d) and one core member reverse (OE48E). (see Fig. 3a)

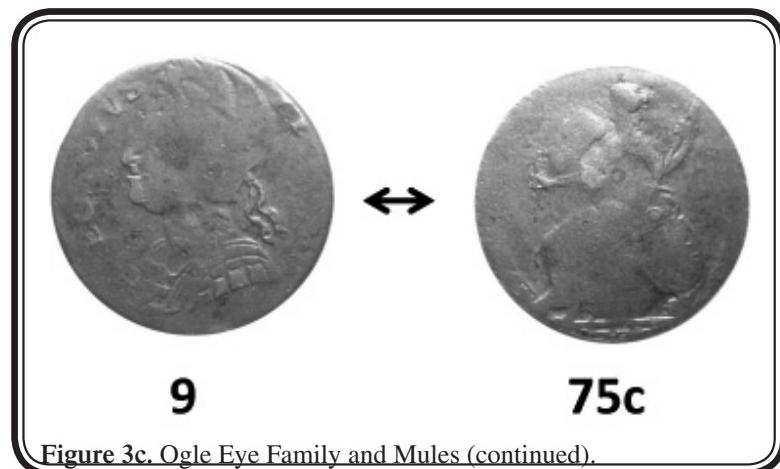


Figure 3c. Ogle Eye Family and Mules (continued).

1771—Faceless George Mule. As mentioned above, Eugene Andrews is actively researching a Family that he has named the Faceless George Family. This Family has only been discovered within the past few years and is distinguished by the loss of detail in King George III's facial features. The loss of the face could have been caused by dies cut too deeply on the reverse side and therefore preventing the details from striking up on the obverse. Not all the Family members exhibit this "faceless" feature, but rather are linked to the Family through die sharing. Nearly all the Faceless George core Family members are dated 1771. Although preliminary plates of the Faceless George Family have been shared among members of the Non-Regal Research Group, new specimens are still being added, making it premature to use FG obverse or reverse designations here.

The single 1771-dated reverse is a mule that is paired only with the Ogle Eye core Family obverse die OE1 (see Fig. 3a) and is one of four muled with core Ogle Eye Family member, OE1. The existence of a Faceless George obverse mule (OE2). (see Fig. 3b) suggests a strong connection between the Ogle Eye Family and the Faceless George Family. This obverse variety is discussed below in the section on obverse mules. However, looking at OE71a, there is evident similarity between the letter-punches and the style of the central device of the reverse die and those of the core Ogle Eye Family. Although a good deal of detail is present on the OE71a reverse mule, the loss of the legends and the bulging of the die along the left and upper periphery indicates that the die is failing.

1775—Young Head Family Mules. The single Family with the largest number of muled reverses paired with Ogle Eye Family obverses is the 1775-dated Young Head Family. While the Young Head Family is extensive and has not been researched in depth, the Family was recognized over a decade ago.⁸ The Young Head Family is characterized primarily by the youthful appearance of King George III on the obverse and includes varieties which are dated 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. The bulk of the coinage is dated 1775. The Young Head Family is one of the most common types of counterfeit halfpenny, and it has been suggested that the minting operation(s) responsible for it must have been large and quite sophisticated or numerous. Presumably such a sophisticated operation would have removed dies from use once they had reached a certain level of deterioration. Since the steel used to make the die was valuable, the deteriorated die either would have been melted down to make a new die or sold

⁸ Schettino et al., *op cit.*, p. 3.

to another less discerning minting operation. The counterfeiters responsible for the Ogle Eye Family probably acquired their old Young Head dies by purchase.

The muled reverses that are thought to be Young Heads are OE75a, OE75b, and OE75c. To a certain extent the authors have taken the liberty in assigning the Young Head label to these three reverses since in all but one case (OE75a), the available coins to make the evaluation are from less deteriorated dies. In addition a high quality OE75a reverse is available for study which was paired with a previously described sub-Family of the Young Head Family called the Bubble Gum Face Family. It is evident that the reverse die was later muled with the Ogle Eye Family obverse OE3 (see Fig. 3b). The designation of the OE75a reverse is somewhat complex because this reverse was called 75A in the Bubble Gum Face Family paper (BF75A). It is most commonly found in the Young Head Family core group which gives it a YHXX designation. Therefore, at this time on the chart the OE75a is listed as OE75a/BF75A/YH75XX. Although collectors will probably reduce the label to OE75a when dealing with this variety, the extended designation will become very important for determining interrelationships between minting operations as more information and coins become available for study.

It should be noted that OE75a and OE75b are very similar, but they are distinguishable by the lack of drapery over Britannia's left shoulder on OE75b. Likewise, the few low-grade examples of OE75b and OE75c are very similar, but they can be differentiated by the shape of the vacant space between Britannia's feet, the exergual line, and the hem line of Britannia's dress.

Simian Family Mule. An interesting discovery was the pairing of the well-made core Ogle Eye Family member OE1 with a crudely made, deteriorating 1775-dated die from the Simian Family. Simian-style counterfeits were the first Family described when the first attempts to place counterfeits into Families were published.⁹ Simian Family coins tend to be popular as there are many varieties available in relatively high numbers and their crudeness is extremely attractive in the eyes of many colonial coin collectors. Most members of the Simian Family have hand-engraved legends described by Mike Ringo as "spidery." The name "Simian" was derived from the long, crude monkey-like left arm of Britannia. Although the initial description of the Family established its general characteristics, the Simian Family has yet to be described in detail. Rickie Rose, with the help of Bob Bowser, is undertaking this large project that spans multiple dates in the reigns of King George II and King George III, as well as the extensive use of Simian dies for muling with other Families. Therefore, it is probably not surprising that one of the reverse Simian dies found its way into the Ogle Eye counterfeiting operation. The Ogle Eye Simian reverse mule is designated OE75d and can be found in Figure 3a. Once again it would seem that by the time this die was used to make Ogle Eye Family coins, it was heavily worn. Like a number of the other mule reverses, it is paired only with the obverse core Family member OE1. One notes the large hand-engraved and crude lettering in the legends. The long monkey arm is not evident due to wear on the die.

Uncertain Family Mule. The only other reverse mule die that has not been discussed is OE75e. Unfortunately a single coin of this variety has been seen on eBay and was not won by any member of the Non-Regal Research Group. Therefore, it has not been available for study. There is no question that the reverse is a different die than the others, but the quality of the sale photograph is too poor to place in a Family with absolute certainty. It may belong to a Family that has yet to be fully described called the Wedge Top Sevens, but until another becomes available for study the authors are unwilling to label the reverse mule Family.

9 Schettino et al., *op cit.*, p. 2.

Obverse Mules

Bubble Gum Face Family. One of the key factors precipitating the study of the Ogle Eye Family was a previous study of the Bubble Gum Face Family that illustrated the die sharing with the Ogle Eye Family.¹⁰ A dramatic progression of die deterioration in front of King George III's face was shown but the key finding was that the die deterioration did not follow an expected pattern based on the reverse dates but rather skipped around. The least deteriorated obverse die had a 1775-dated reverse. After progressing through a mix of 1773- and 1748-dated reverses, the most deteriorated obverse die state was paired with a 1748-dated reverse. This observation provided excellent evidence that the dates on coins did not necessarily indicate either the time the coins were minted or the order in which they were minted.¹¹ Since we know the Bubble Gum Face counterfeiting operation took place in 1796, we can speculate that the counterfeiters had multiple dies which they used haphazardly on any given minting day.

The obverse die is labeled OE(1)/BF1/YHXX. (see Fig. 3b, above). Although both OE(1) and OE75a are Bubble Gum Face Family mules, a ligature line has been drawn between them on the plate, since they are both oriented near each other. However, they do represent core Family members of the Bubble Gum Face Family. The OE(1)/BF1/YHXX obverse is paired also with two Ogle Eye Family reverses – OE48A and OE48B. Though the plate coin used to represent OE(1) shows an early die state, the actual OE(1) that is paired with the OE48A reverse die, as well as the OE(1) obverse that is paired with the OE48B reverse die, is in a very late die state. This means these mules were made late in the life of the OE(1) die.

Faceless George Family. The only other obverse mule in the Ogle Eye Family is OE(2)/FGXX. As mentioned above, the Faceless George Family usually carries a profile of King George III without well-defined features. OE(2) departs from this pattern with a distinct nose, mouth, chin, and eyes. Since research is ongoing on the Faceless George Family, this obverse has not been definitively designated as a member of the core Family. Only a single coin has been found so far muling the OE(2) obverse with the 48A reverse. However, there are a number of similarities between the legend details and the style of the die engraving that suggest a close relationship between the Faceless George and the Ogle Eye Families.

Brockages

While boggings are not uncommon in the entire group of counterfeit halfpence, the existence of three different boggings within the core Family members of the Ogle Eye Family is unusual. (see Fig. 2, above) Two obverses (OE1 and OE9) are found as boggings and one reverse OE48A is known with a bogging. The high number of errors, including many double struck coins, found within the Ogle Eye Family provides some indirect evidence that the minting operation was not very sophisticated.

Metrology

The Ogle Eye Family is notable in that the total number of known existent core Family member coins (49), not counting the boggings, is not far off from the number of known mules (36). These numbers tend to support the idea that old, worn dies from other minting operations were brought into early use alongside of the core dies of the Ogle Eye Family. In addition, the planchets vary widely in size and weight within each variety, but weight differences between the core Family members and the mules were less significant. Core Ogle Eye Family members had an average weight of 76.3 grains while the mules had an average weight of 73.5 grains. In both

10 Bowser, *op. cit.*; Bowser and Trudgen, *op. cit.*

11 B. Bowser and Trudgen, *op. cit.*

cases the weight is about half of what was expected for a Regal copper. Finally a comparison of the diameters between the core Family members and the mules indicate that both were exactly the same at 26.8 millimeters. All coins of both the core Family and the mules were found to have an axis no more than 45 degrees off coin turn.

Despite the close similarity of the planchets used to make both the core Family members and the mules, there was some internal variability. One core Family member weighs a relatively heavy 104 grains and one mule 86.7 grains. The general use of light-weight planchets is in accord with those used for other counterfeits thought to have been produced in the late 1790s. Also of note within the known varieties of core Family members, three (OE3-48A, OE5-48D, and OE6-48E) are represented by only a single surviving example. Similarly, among the mules, five are known from single examples (see Table 1, below). Because all the coins are generally low grade and difficult to attribute, the authors suspect that other coins in this Family will eventually come to light.

Conclusions

The Ogle Eye Family of counterfeit halfpence is made up of nine varieties with both obverse and reverse core Family members. Interestingly, the core Family member obverse number OE9 is known only as a brockage or paired with a muled reverse. The Family is significant for the many mulings with core Family members, thereby creating an additional twelve varieties. It is evident that most of the dies used in the muling process were worn and deteriorating. In the few instances where die state information is perceptible on the coins, such as when the obverse mule from the Bubble Gum Face Family was used, the resultant coins all involved the BF1/OE(1) obverse in a very late die state. This suggests that the mule dies were brought into the Ogle Eye minting operation after they had seen extensive use elsewhere. In addition, the observation that the number of core Family members compared to the muled members are not very different might indicate that the worn mule dies had been present early in the minting process and were used haphazardly. Such random use would also account for the extensive die sharing between the core Family members and the mule dies.

There seems to be some similarity between the punches and device style used for the Ogle Eye Family and the unpublished Faceless George Family, but the full evaluation of this relationship must wait for the definitive study of the Faceless George Family to be completed. The planchet stock used to make all the Ogle Eye Family and mules was significantly underweight compared to that of Regal halfpence. The consistency of the weights and diameters of the core Ogle Eye Family members and the mules suggests that both were produced in the same period. It is probable that a great number of coiners were working with a mixture of new and previously used dies, thereby inadvertently creating many mule coins. Based on the court records of 1796 concerning the Bubble Gum Face Family of counterfeits and the close relationship of that Family with the Ogle Eye Family, the were also probably minted in the late 1790s despite dates on the coins. Both evasion and counterfeit coins produced in this period were poorly struck on very light and small planchets. The Ogle Eye Family of 1748 dated coins and the Family mules were very probably produced by a London-based coining operation in the late 1790s, before the British Crown contracted with Birmingham's Mathew Boulton in 1797, to address the problem of circulating counterfeit coppers.

Table 1. Metrology of the Ogle Eye Family

	Number of specimens	Weight (grains)	Range	Number of specimens	Diameter (mm)	Range	Number of specimens	Axis	Number of specimens
OE Core Family									
1748									
1-48E	4	69		1	26.9		1	Coin	1
2-48B	8	79.8	73.8–85.4	5	27.1	26.9–27.2	5	Coin	5
3-48A	1	64.8		1	28		1	Coin	1
4-48C	6	84.9	76–104	4	26.7	26–27	4	Coin	4
4-48D	14	76.3	72.6–80	8	26.9	26.4–27.7	8	Coin	5
5-48D	1								
6-48E	1								
7-48F	9	73.2	64.2–82	6	27.3	26.1–27.3	6	Coin	5
8-48G	5	73.3	66.5–77.3	5	26.7	26.5–26.9	5	Coin	2
Core Averages	49	76.3	64.2–104	30	26.8	26–27.7	30	Coin	23
Brockages									
OE1	2	82.5	80.2–82.5	2	26.9	26.8–26.9	2		
OE48A	1	70.2		1	27.1		1		
OE9	1								
Brockage Averages	4	76.4		3	27		3		
Mules									
1738									
OE1-OE38a/FS38XX	10	78.9	75.7–82.8	5	26.7	26.4–27	5	Coin	3
1748									
BF1/OE(1)- OE48A	6	71.8	67.1–77.7	4	27.3	27.1–27.6	4	Coin	4

		Number of specimens	Weight (grains)	Range	Number of specimens	Diameter (mm)	Range	Number of specimens	Axis	Number of specimens
BF1/OE(1)-OE48B	1	72.4		1	27.3		1	Coin	1	
FGXX/OE(2)-OE48B	1	70.9		1	27		1	Coin	1	
1771										
OE1-OE71a/FG71XX	3	76.2		1	26.7		1	Coin	1	
1775										
OE1-OE75b/BF75A/ YH75XX										
OE1-OE75d/ Simian75XX	2	65.6		69.5-71.2	2	26.7		26.5-26.8	2	Coin 1
OE3-OE75a/YH75XX	6	67.3		64.8-73.3	4	27		26.4-27.3	4	Coin 1
OE4-OE75b/YH75XX	1	72.5		1	26.5		1	Coin	1	
OE4-OE75e/WT775XX	1									
OE6-OE75c/YH75XX	1	75.2		1	26.2		1	Coin	1	
OE9-OE75c/YH75XX	2	70.8		69.5-72	2	26.3		26.2-26.4	2	
BF1/OE (1)-OE75a/ BF75A/YH75XX	2	86		85.3-86.7	2	27.4		27.1-27.6	2	Coin 2
Mule Averages	36	73.5		64.9-86.7	24	26.8		26.2-27.6	24	Coin

Acknowledgements

The sharing of images and information by members of the internet-based Yahoo Colonial-Coin and Non-Regal Research groups as well as members of The Colonial Coin Collectors Club has made this paper possible. Special contributors of images include Dan Burleson, Eugene Edwards, Edward Foster, Gordon Nichols, David Palmer, Julia Purdy, Jeff Rock, Rickie Rose, Clem Schettino, Gary Trudgen, and Vicken Yegaparian. Photo credits are not individually provided for each image, but represent coins owned by the people acknowledged above. In addition equally important as images is the data for each coin which was selflessly provided by Dan Burleson, Eugene Edwards, Edward Foster, Gordon Nichols, Julia Purdy, Jeff Rock, Rickie Rose, and Clem Schettino.

THIS ORPHAN NEEDS A HOME: GEORIUVS. III . VTS / BRITI

by
Jim Biancarosa; Palm Beach, FL

My interest in Wood 33 began at the 2004 NYINC, when I stopped by Del Parker's table. He deals in Irish coins but usually has some English pieces. He had just bought Anthony Terranova's collection of evasion coppers. I saw some I liked and offered to buy them. He said that he was selling them as a lot—all or nothing. I do not remember the price he asked for the lot but it was more than I was willing to pay. I gave him my phone number and said I would be interested in most coins but not all of them. After the show it must have been a few weeks he called. I was thrilled, but the price was still more than I wanted to pay (there were more than 200 pieces in the lot), but I bought the group anyway. Did you ever leave a show and think to yourself, "I should have bought that coin?" This was my second chance and I did not think there was likely to be a third. Included in the lot was the example of Wood 33 (also known as BL-37) that started me on this quest.

Many people pass up all kinds of varieties and oddities because they look, but do not see the things that set them apart from the common. They look past items and accept what others have said about them without question. I for one like these people, as they give me a chance to cherry-pick some very nice coins. I also know this because my first example of Wood 33 was misidentified as a common counterfeit halfpenny. I had it for quite some time before I realized it was not. I then thought it was an evasion copper. Later, I discovered that the coin was listed in the *Charlton Catalogue of Canadian Colonial Tokens* as BL-37 (Wood 33) and that it was a Blacksmith token. Since I first acquired it, the coin has moved from my counterfeit collection to my evasion collection, and now to my Blacksmith collection. But where does it really belong?

When I studied art, my first instructor said to me, "Don't paint what you think—a preconceived idea of what it [the subject] looks like—, paint what you see, whether it be with your eye or your mind's eye." Sometimes you have to turn the object that you are painting upside down to see how it is actually constructed and throw out the preconceived notion you have of the object. When I study a coin I look at it as I would study something I would like to paint and think about how I would go about painting it. This article takes a look at Wood 33/BL-37, which has been variously described as a Blacksmith token or an evasion copper, and attempts to let the coin speak for itself.

Previous Views

In a 2009 article,¹ Tim Grawey, read the legends of Wood 33/BL-37 as GLORIOVS III. VIS / BITIT before going on to talk about Howland Wood's original Blacksmith copper article and his comparisons of Wood 33 to Wood 34 and 35. This was followed by a discussion of the competing economic and political relationships between Vermont, Lower Canada, and the West Indies, stating,

Politically Vermont refused to join the American Confederation for several years. Economically, it was dependent on the province of Quebec for its trade. Vermont is the only New England State with no coastline in the Atlantic Ocean. To be successful its produce needed to access the St. Lawrence River via Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. Certain "separatists" within Vermont attempted to strengthen its trade links with

¹ T. Grawey, "Is Canadian Counterfeit series linked to Vermont?" *Canadian Coin News* (2/3/2009): 25.

Canada, Britain and the West Indies hoping that this would actually lead to Vermont rejoining the British Empire.²

After describing the close connections between Vermont and Montreal, he reports stories of the existence of "secret" Vermont mints, suggesting that Wood 33 may have been produced there.

In James A. Haxby's *A Guide Book Of Canadian Coins and Tokens* (2013), Wood 33 has been removed from the Blacksmith series—correctly in my opinion—but is now listed as a "Bungtown (BITIT)" token. However, the closely related Wood 34/BL-38 variety, which was probably made by the same person (see below), is still treated as a true Blacksmith token. The eighth edition of the *Charlton Standard Catalogue of Canadian Colonial Tokens* (2013) separates both coins from the Blacksmith coppers and endorses Grawey's view that Wood 33 was struck in Vermont.

In a very informative article in *The C-4 Newsletter*, John Lorenzo verifies that the reverse legend of Wood 33 should be read as BRTIT rather than BITIT, but argues that the coin should be treated as an imported evasion copper.³ The same view was taken by Oliver Hoover in a *Colonial Newsletter* article dealing with this variety.⁴ He attempted to debunk the old claim that the VTS element of the obverse legend (usually read as VIS, but see below) was a reference to Vermont, going on to illustrate apparent similarities between the evasion copper variety Atkins 271 and Wood 33 in an effort to establish a clear connection to the evasion series.

I respectfully disagree with Hoover's conclusions based on the many differences between Atkins 271 and Wood 33 (compared in Fig. 1). The bust and female figure, as well as the letter-punches, are different on the two coppers. Overall the quality of workmanship and manufacture also are not to the same standard (see further below). I agree that the arm is similar, but this can be said about most colonial coppers, counterfeits, and some evasion coppers.

Most references describe the legends of Wood 33/BL-37 as GLORIOVS . III . VIS. / BITIT, but it will be shown here that the correct reading should be GEORIUVS . III . VTS / BRITI. It will



Figure 1. Wood 33/BL 37 (left) compared with Atkins 271 (right). Courtesy of the author.

2 T. Grawey, "Is Canadian Counterfeit Series Linked to Vermont?" *Canadian Coin News* (2/3/2009): 25.

3 J. Lorenzo, "Canadian Blacksmith Wood 38 family—with a Synopsis of Wood 33-46 Blacksmiths," *C-4 Newsletter* 16.1 (Spring 2008): 46–51.

4 O. Hoover, "Wood 33: An Evasive Copper in North America," *CNL* 137 (August 2008): 3279–3288.

also be suggested that this copper issue was actually produced in North America, perhaps for use in Vermont.

Fabric and Legends

In his article, John Lorenzo argues that the edges of the die were filed down purposely to obscure the tops of the letters in the legend.⁵ The file marks, which appear as raised lines on the coin, are very clear on some examples (Fig. 2). However, the tops of the letters are sometimes faintly visible on other examples. These exhibit rust on the die but no filing.

Even without the cases of edge-filing, the flans used for Wood 33 seem too small for the full legends and devices to appear on the finished coin. Using photographs of the rusted-die variety Wood 33 supplied by Clem Schettino, I tried to complete the letters as I thought they should look if the coin was struck with a squared die and proper punches. There is not enough room on the flan to fit a full set of devices and legends, as can be seen from the closeness of the female figure to the edge (Fig. 3). This poor arrangement of the design indicates a lack of experience by the die cutter.

Turning to the legends themselves, the second letter of the word normally read as GLORIUVS on Wood 33 is actually over-punched and has a center stroke, which would make it an E rather than an L (Fig. 4). This changes the legend to GEORIUVS.

The I in GEORIUVS has a weak right serif, while the left serif starts higher and looks as if it was added by hand (Fig. 5). This problem seems to continue in the ordinals (III), which all have a missing right serif (Fig. 6). Close inspection reveals that they were not made with the same punch. The I on the far right looks square on the bottom and could pass as a proper I with a broken right serif. The central I looks like the serif might have been added by hand. The serif is not square with the upright and the bottom points downward at an angle.

⁵ Lorenzo, *op. cit.*



Figure 2. File marks on Wood 33/BL 37.
Courtesy of the author.



Figure 3. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL 37 reverse illustrating the lack of space for lettering behind the female figure and possible cornucopia in arm. Courtesy of the author.

The I on the far left seems thicker and has a stubbier serif than the others.

It is unclear to me why only the left serif was included on the ordinal numerals, but the fact that it was makes a strong argument against reading the last part of the obverse legend as VIS. The middle letter in this word features prominent serifs on left and right (Fig. 7). This letter is probably a T as it looks similar to the fourth letter in the reverse legend, which is generally recognized as a T. The only difference is the letter between V and S on the obverse appears to have had serifs added by hand. Thus the reading of the obverse legend changes from VIS to VTS—a possible reference to Vermont?

Having established the obverse legend as GEORIUVS III VTS, let us consider the reverse legend, which traditionally has been read as BITIT.

The second letter has a thin upright with both a right and left serif. A weak center stroke and tail make this letter an R (Fig. 8). The end of the tail touches the letter to its immediate right.

The third and fifth letters of the reverse legend are commonly read as T, but they should actually be read as I. As Hoover reported, "under raking light the weakly punched and obscured serif ends of a top crossbar can be made out in the spaces between the 'I' and the flanking 'T'."⁶ Although I had previously believed these letters to be Ts, my purchase of an example



Figure 4. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating the E in GEORIUVS. *Courtesy of the author.*



Figure 5. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating weak right serif of I in GEORIUVS. *Courtesy of the author.*



Figure 6. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating missing right serif of I in ordinals. *Courtesy of the author.*

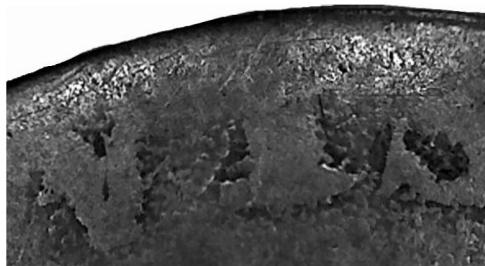


Figure 7. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating the serifs of the central letter in "VIS". *Courtesy of the author.*

⁶ Hoover, *op. cit.*: 3281.

with ICCS certification NO.0S 030 graded F-12 showed Hoover's reading to be correct. Thus, the reverse legend must be BRITI, rather than BITIT, or BRTIT. One strange feature of the legend is the lack of serifs on the T when they were added to the T in VTS (Fig. 9). Maybe the engraver got tired or forgot to add them.

A faint numeral 7 seems to appear far to the right under the exergue line on one of the specimens in my collection. A hint of this feature also occurs on two others. At first I thought it was a scratch, but the other two confirmed to me it was a 7. It was probably engraved in the die by hand. In any case, this feature suggests that a date was originally present in the exergue.

Devices

The obverse male bust is unlike any in either the evasion or counterfeit (Bungtown) series. The head and neck are short and wide, the face has a distinctive pug nose, and the ribbon and bow are treated in a unique manner. The style of the bust truncation is also very different from any I have seen, with the exceptions of Wood 34/BL-38 and Wood 35/BL-39 (Figs. 10–11), which may have been cut by the same hand. The ribbons and bows on Wood 35 are very similar to those of Wood 33, and I have not seen them depicted like this on any other coin except for some Blacksmith tokens. The devices of Wood 34 appear in mirror image—an amateur mistake,⁷ making me think that this was a first attempt at coining. Charlton saw this error as a sign that Wood 34 was an imitation of Wood 33, but I think it is just as possible that Wood 34 represents a failed first coinage that was subsequently replaced by the better-executed Wood 33. The extreme rarity of Wood 34 supports this view. It also seems unlikely that supposed imitators would have specifically chosen Wood 33 to copy out of all the other possible (and often better produced) regal, counterfeit, and evasion halfpence in circulation.

The treatment of the female figure on the reverse of Wood 33 is also distinct. The legs are long and rubbery, but not like the Simian Family counterfeit halfpenny. The right arm is large and straight, and seems to hold a clover instead of the usual branch. Too much of the gown seems to flow behind the back of the figure and there is no evidence of Britannia's usual spear (Fig. 3), making

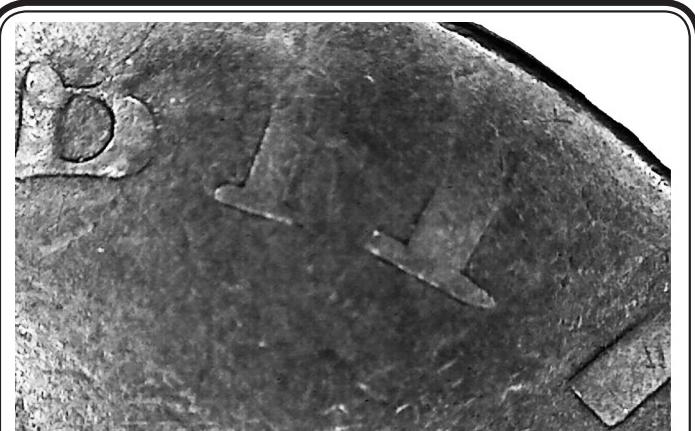


Figure 8. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating the R in the reverse legend. *Courtesy of the author.*

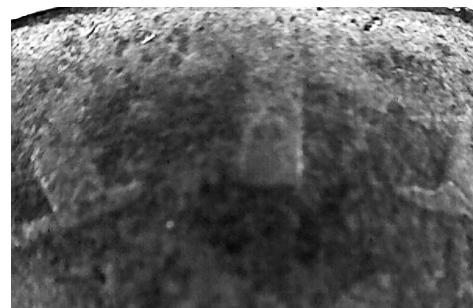


Figure 9. Enlargement of Wood 33/BL-37 illustrating the third letter in "BITIT". *Courtesy of the author.*

⁷ I can confirm from my personal experience with die-making that it is very difficult to get used to cutting in mirror image.

me wonder whether the curves could represent something else that she is holding—perhaps a cornucopia?⁸

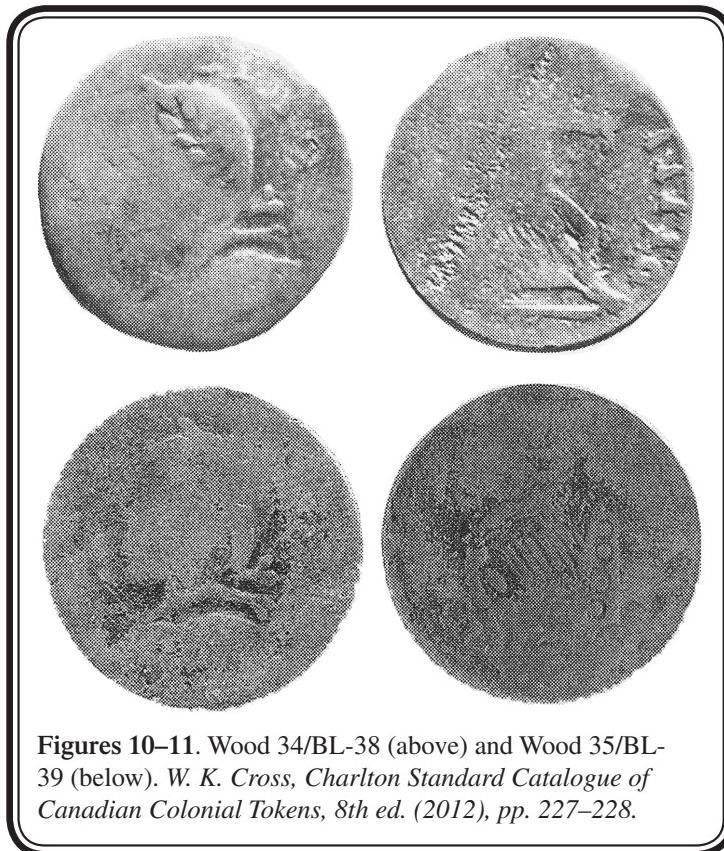
The Evasion Question

I have 278 evasion coppers in my collection and Wood 33/BL-37 does not look like any of them. While not all evasion coppers are weakly struck, those that are have a weak center with a flat silhouette-like bust, giving the impression that the flans had lower centers or the die had a shallow void where the details of the bust should have been. Most evasion coppers have bold legends, and none that I am aware of have filed, rounded flan edges. In contrast, the center of Wood 33 is actually its highest point, despite the lack of detail, and, as we have seen, regularly features legends obscured by misspellings, odd spacing, broken punches, and filed edges.

Wood 33 is also distinct from evasion coppers from the metrological perspective. The diameters of the examples in my collection range from 26.37 to 26.79 mm with a thickness of 1.24 mm and weights between 5.6 grams (86 grains) and 6.3 grams (97 grains). These weights and measurements are low compared to those provided by Cobwright for the bulk of the evasion series.⁹ The diameters and weights of Wood 33 seem somewhat more in line with those known for counterfeit halfpence than with evasion coppers.

Despite Lorenzo' and Hoover's association of Wood 33 with the British evasion copper series, it is really a distinct variety that stands alone. The legends of Wood 33/BL-37 have not been documented for any evasions and those that come close involve a different treatment of the devices and have been suspected of being produced in North America.

The legend of Atkins 273 is given as GLORIOVS III . VIS. / BITIT. This inscription is different from that of Wood 33 in that it is missing a stop after the first word. GLORIOVS employs a second O rather than the U of Wood 33's legend and adds as stop after VIS. The legend on Atkins 304 is GLORIUVS . III . VIS / BRITAT. While the obverse inscription would fit the legend



Figures 10–11. Wood 34/BL-38 (above) and Wood 35/BL-39 (below). W. K. Cross, *Charlton Standard Catalogue of Canadian Colonial Tokens*, 8th ed. (2012), pp. 227–228.

⁸ Female figures holding a cornucopia also occur on roughly contemporary tokens circulating in Lower Canada (Charlton LC-46, LC-47, LC-48, , LC-53, LC-56, LC-57). -Ed.

⁹ M. I. Cobwright, *A Journey through the Monkakian Rain Forest in Search of the Spiney Fubbaduck by Malachy Greensword* (Beeston, 1993): 40.

for Wood 33 (except for the misreading of L for E), it seems impossible to take the reverse BRITAT as a misreading of BRITI.

Both of these Atkins varieties were omitted by Cobwright on the grounds that they are "Canadian" and he lists no other evasion coppers with the GEORIUVS or GLORIUVS legend. Of the evasion varieties that are somewhat close in spelling, none look like Wood 33. Although the devices (male bust facing right and female seated facing left) are the same, the artistic treatment is very different.

Origin

Of the 39 examples of Wood 33 in my collection, 10 came from Canadian sources (1 New Brunswick, 1 Nova Scotia, 7 Ontario, 1 Toronto), 12 from New York State (9 Upstate New York, 1 New York City, 1 Long Island), 4 from Massachusetts, 2 from Michigan, 1 from New Jersey, 2 from Florida, and 1 from Ireland.¹⁰ The fact that none are from the United Kingdom and the majority come from the Northeast, Michigan, and Canada seems to strongly indicate the original area of circulation and probably production.

If the area of circulation and production are one and the same, I would follow Tim Grawey in attributing Wood 33 to Vermont on the basis of the VTS of the obverse legend, the economic relationship between Vermont and Montreal, and the crudeness of the workmanship.

It is worth pointing out that on Wood 33 the ordinals (III) are all missing a right serif or only have a left serif added. The Machin's Mills counterfeit varieties V.6-76A, 72A, 72B, and V.19-87C also have missing serifs, perhaps indicating a possible connection between the well-known coining enterprise that produced state coppers for Vermont, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and Wood 33.

Lastly, the sheer quantities of Wood 33 that are available on the market and in collections make me wonder whether they were not actually produced as a legitimate copper coinage. As mentioned above, I have 39 in my collection and I have heard of (but not seen) some collectors with up to 300 pieces. It seems impossible to collect a single evasion or counterfeit die variety on this kind of scale. How could this be if Wood 33 did not have some kind of legitimacy or official backing?

Conclusion

In this paper I have presented what I see when I look at Wood 33 and the possible conclusions that can be drawn from my observations. Based on what I saw, I attempted to recreate the devices and legends as they would have looked if the dies had been in perfect condition and the coins were fully struck up. The results have been incorporated into an oil painting (Fig. 12) and should allow readers to fully visualize the revised readings of the legends and interpretation of the devices that I have made in the text.

10 The Irish seller gave no indication that the coin was actually found in Ireland.

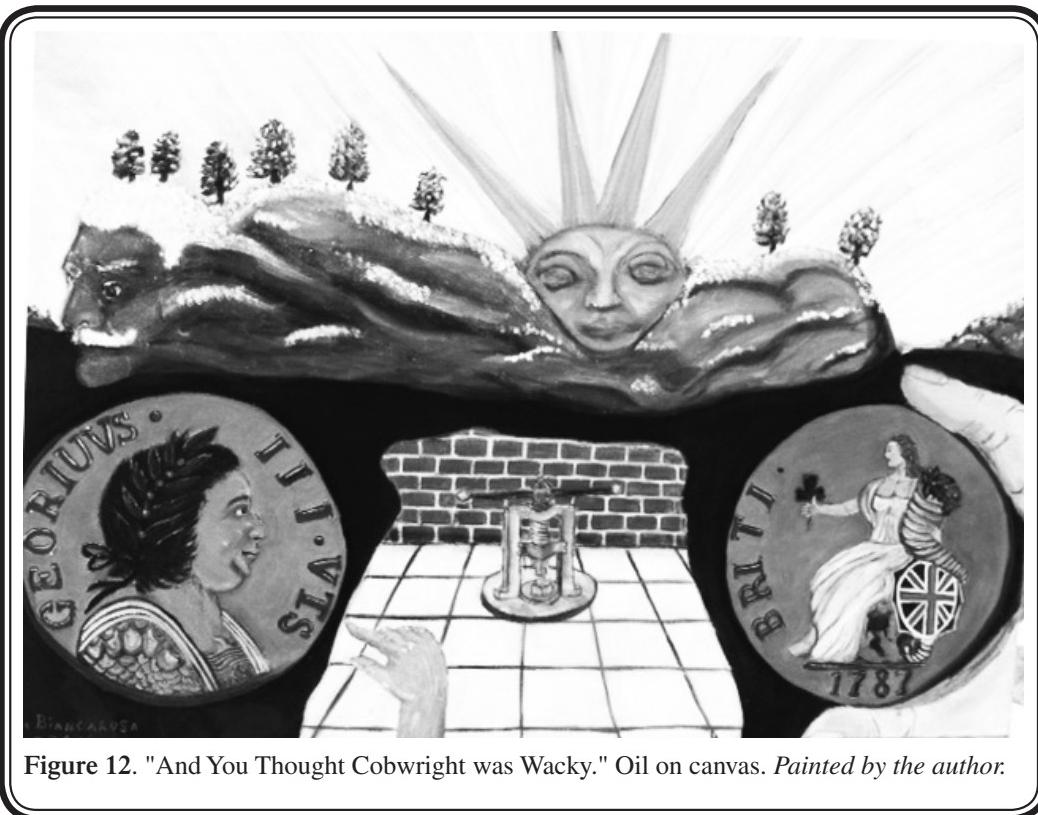


Figure 12. "And You Thought Cobwright was Wacky." Oil on canvas. *Painted by the author.*

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Fred Schornstein for reading and commenting on an earlier version of this article as well as Tony Swicer and Chuck Heck for listening to my ideas about Wood 33 and assistance with photography. I could not close this article without thanking Oliver Hoover for his wonderful article and all he does for this hobby, and John Lorenzo for his in-depth and thought-provoking article. As for Tim Grawey, I remove every article you write in *Canadian Coin News* and save them for future reference. Thanks also to the readers of this fine publication. I welcome further thoughts and comments on Wood 33.

BLACKSMITH COPPER METROLOGY

by
Oliver D. Hoover; Burlington, Ontario

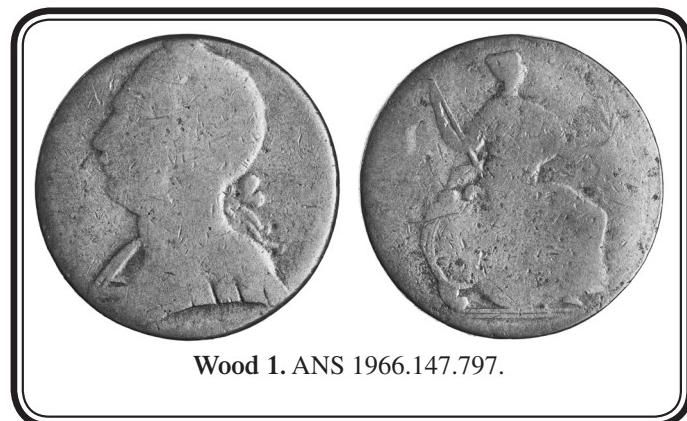
Introduction

In November of 2013, there was a brief online discussion about the weights of Blacksmith coppers in the collections of members of the online Blacksmith Tokens Yahoo group (BlacksmithTokens@yahoogroups.com). This resulted in an outpouring of weight data for many of the varieties originally catalogued by Howland Wood in "The Canadian Blacksmith Coppers," *The Numismatist* (1910). The following pages present these data, supplemented by weights taken from the Blacksmith coppers in the ANS collection, and suggests conclusions that may be drawn from them.

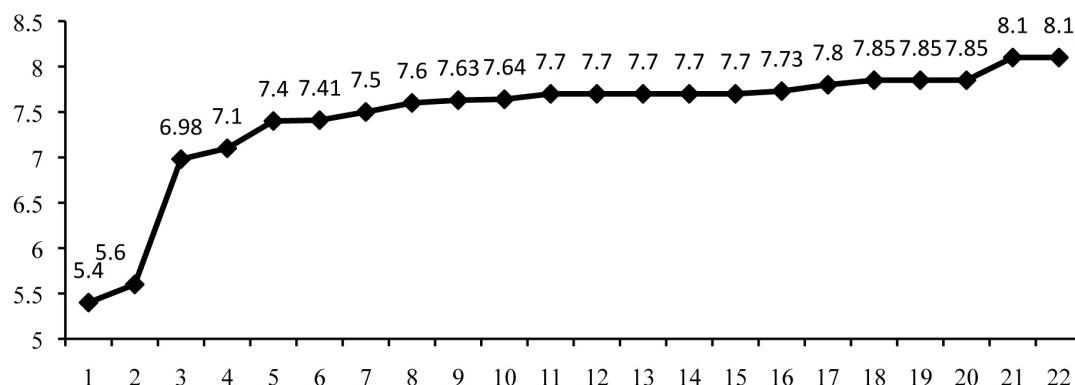
Weight information for specimens in private collections was provided by Jim Biancarosa, Robert Bowser, Paul Cartmill, David Fanning, Todd Gredesky, John Hannson, Jeff Lipskey, Gord Nichols, Mike Packard, Jeff Rock, Charlie Rohrer, and Charles Smith.

Wood 1

Twenty-two specimens of Wood 1 had weights ranging from 5.4 to 8.1 grams with a median of 7.7 grams and a mode of 7.7 grams. The general clustering of the weights between 7.5 and 7.85 grams strongly suggests that 7.7 grams (118.8 grains) was the target weight for this variety.

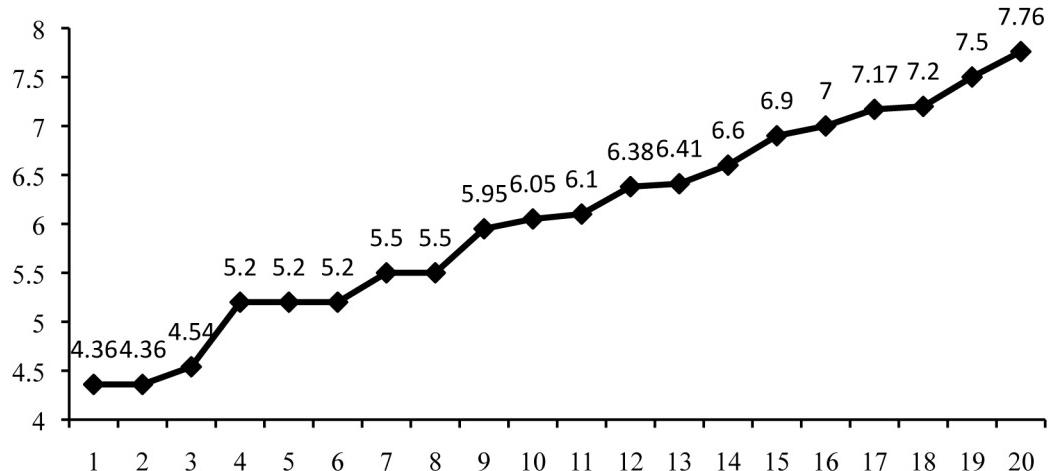


Wood 1

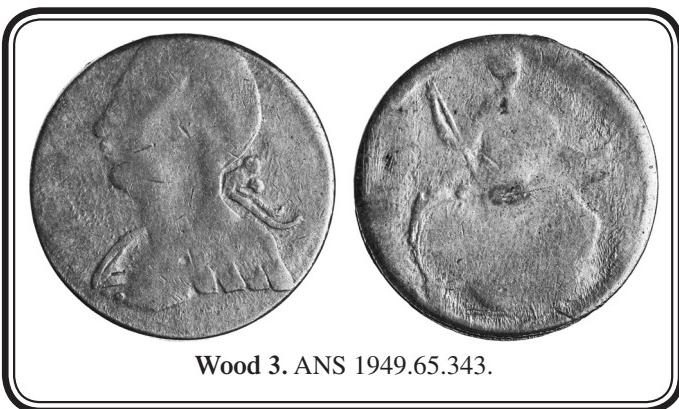


Wood 2

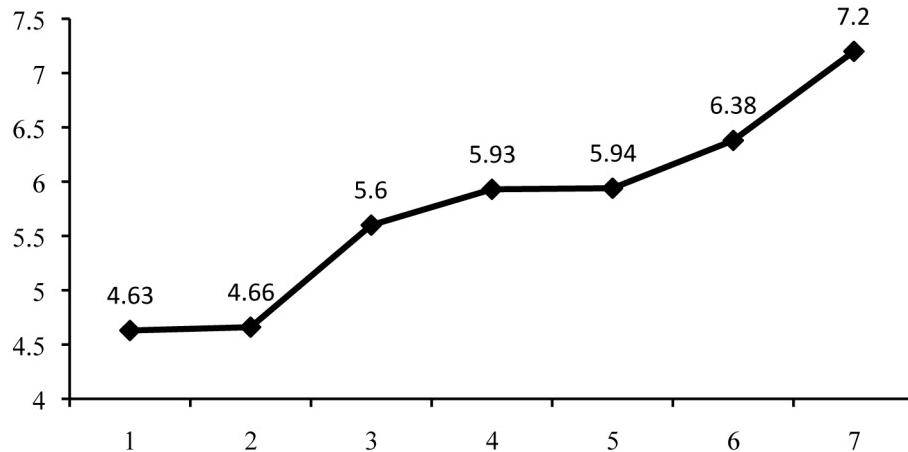
Twenty examples of Wood 2 had weights ranging from 4.36 to 7.76 grams with a median of 6.05 grams, a mode of 5.2 grams, and an average of 6.04 grams. While these numbers tend to suggest that the target weight might have been around 6 grams (92.5 grains), the fact that six specimens (30% of the sample) fall into the range between 6.9 and 7.76 grams may warrant pushing the probable standard up to about 7 grams (108 grains).

**Wood 2****Wood 3**

Although at seven specimens the sample for Wood 3 can hardly be called robust, it seems likely that this variety was also produced with an eye to the 6 gram mark. The weights range from 4.63 to 7.2 grams with a median of 5.93 grams, a mode of 5.9 grams, and an average weight of 5.76 grams.



Wood 3

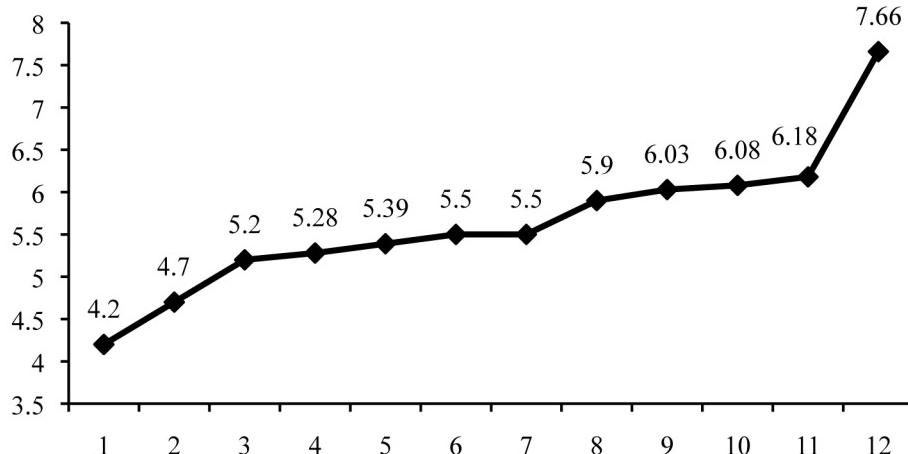


Wood 4

Twelve examples of this variety had weights ranging from 4.2 to 7.66 grams, with a median of 5.5 grams, a mode of 5.5 grams, and an average weight of 5.63 grams. The clustering between 5.6 and 5.94 grams may suggest that the target weight for Wood 4 was also around 6 grams (92.5 grains).

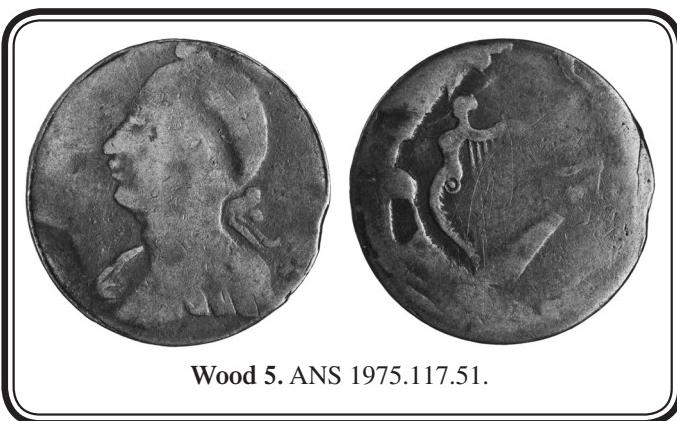
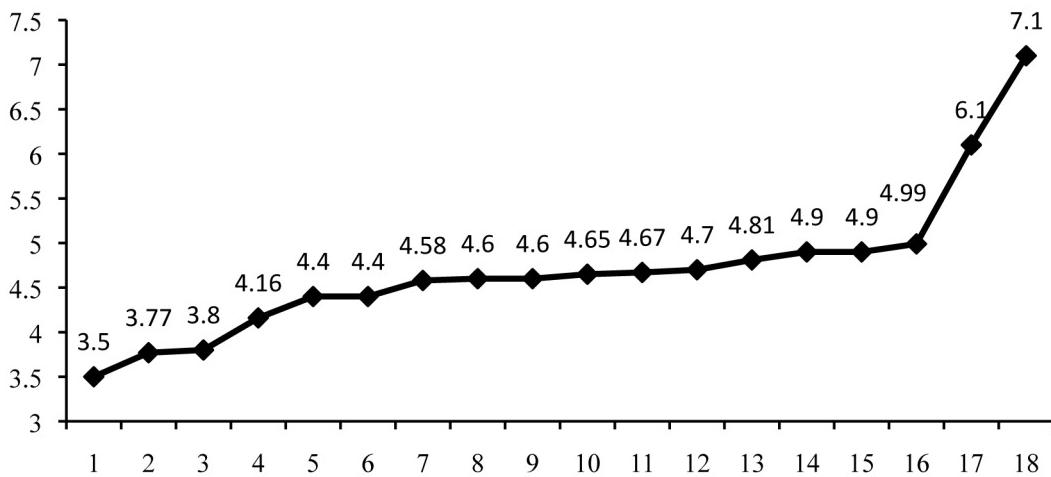


Wood 4

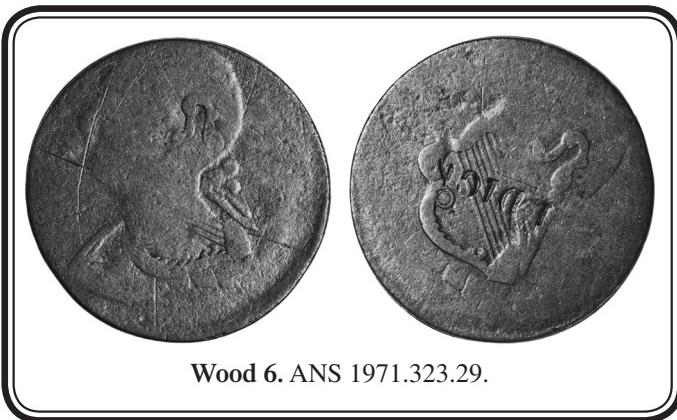


Wood 5

The target weight of Wood 5 seems to have been lower still than that of Wood 4. In a sample of eighteen specimens, the weights ranged between 3.5 and 7.1 grams, with a median of 4.6 grams, a mode of 4.6 grams, and an average weight of 4.7 grams. All of this strongly points to an intended weight of about 4.6 grams (70.9 grains).

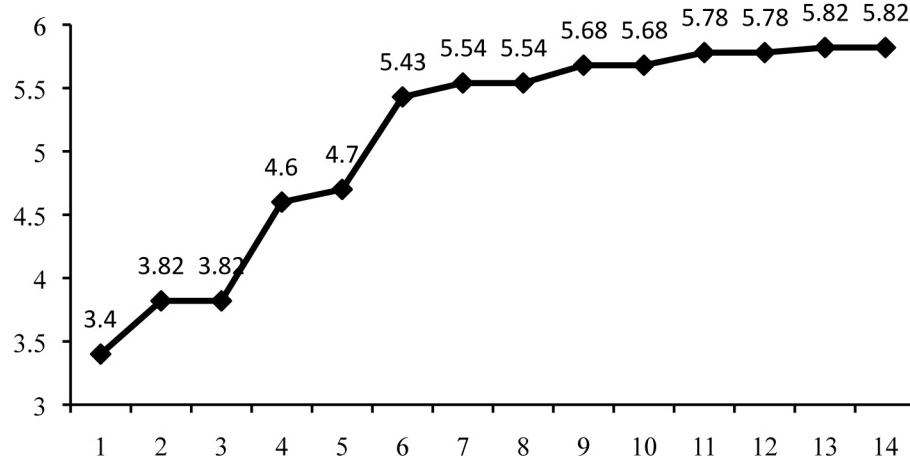
**Wood 5****Wood 6**

In a sample of fourteen specimens, the weights ranged from 3.4 to 5.82 grams with a median of 5.54 grams and an average weight of 5.1 grams. The clustering between 5.43 and 5.82 grams seems to suggest an intended weight of about 5.7 grams. The chart for Wood 6 is notable for the absence of the heavy outliers in the 7 gram range typical of those for Wood 3–5, although Charlton reports



potential weights as high as 7.5 grams for this variety. The reliability of the weight ranges given in Charlton are open to question, however, since it does not recognize the lowest and/or highest weights recorded here for Wood 1, Wood 4, Wood 5, and Wood 11.

Wood 6

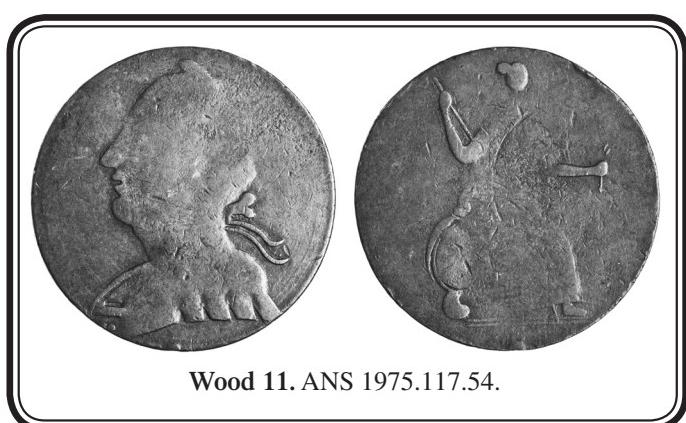


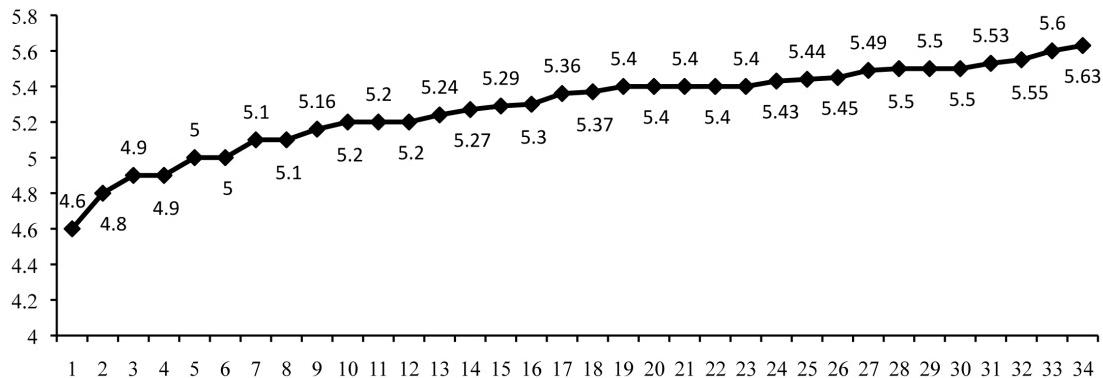
Wood 7–10

The limited data obtained for Wood 7 (4.64, 5.08, 5.3, 5.38, 5.44 grams), Wood 8 (5.54 grams), Wood 9 (3.26 grams), and Wood 10 (3.24, 3.3, 3.58, 3.58, 3.68 grams) make it difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the probable target weights for these varieties. Still, the five weights for Wood 7 suggest a possible intended weight of around 5.4 grams. Wood 10 is substantially lighter with weights pointing in the direction of a standard of about 3.6 grams.

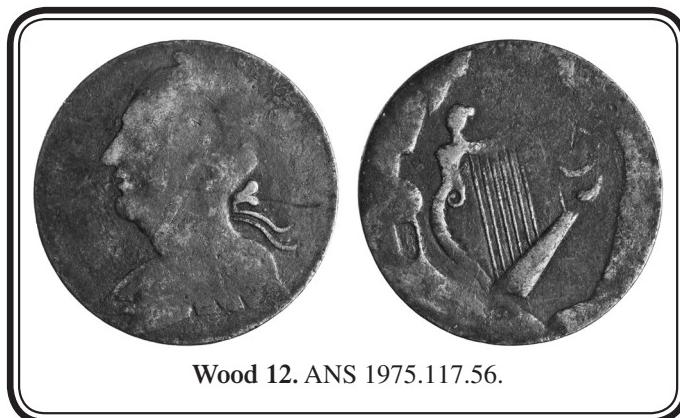
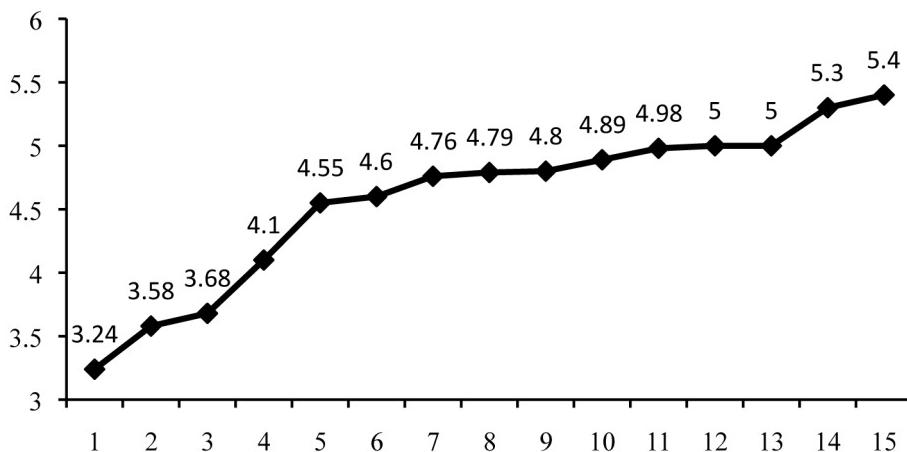
Wood 11

In a sample of thirty-four specimens with weights ranging from 4.6 to 5.63 grams, the median was 5.36 grams, the mode was 5.4 grams, and the average weight was 5.28 grams. These numbers strongly suggest that the target weight for Wood 11 was about 5.4 grams (83.3 grains). The consistency of the weights in the sample also seems to imply that Wood 11 was produced by a coining operation that paid much closer attention to the metrology of its products than many of the other Blacksmith series.



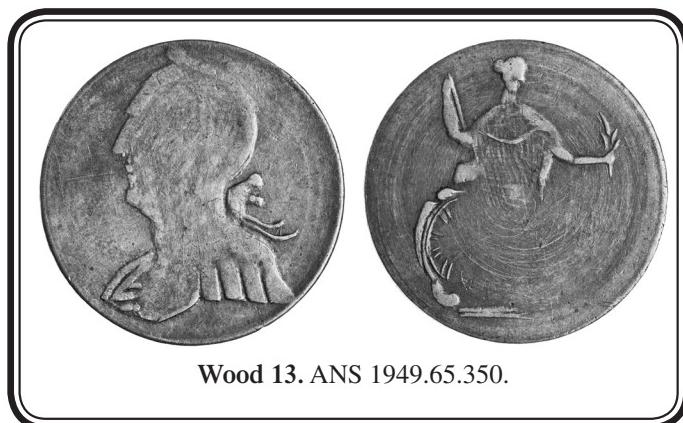
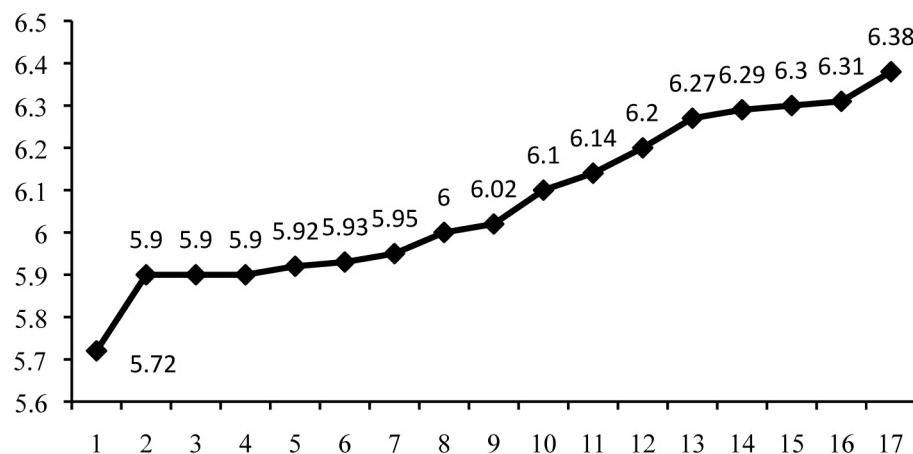
Wood 11**Wood 12**

Fifteen specimens of this variety ranged in weight from 3.24 to 5.4 grams, with a median of 4.79 grams and an average weight of 4.57 grams. The clustering between 4.76 and 5 grams points to a probable target weight of 4.8 grams (74 grains).

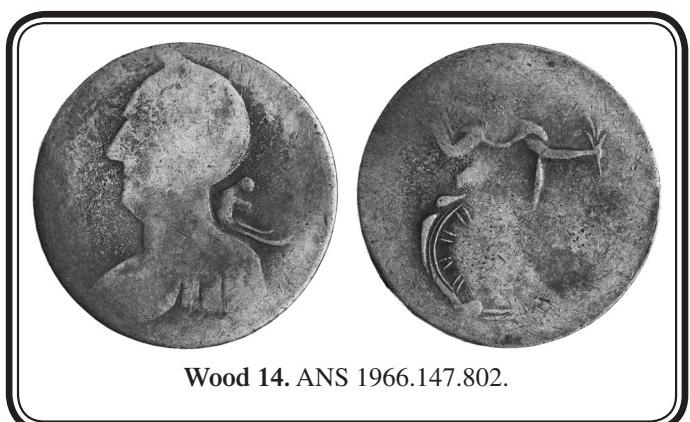
**Wood 12**

Wood 13

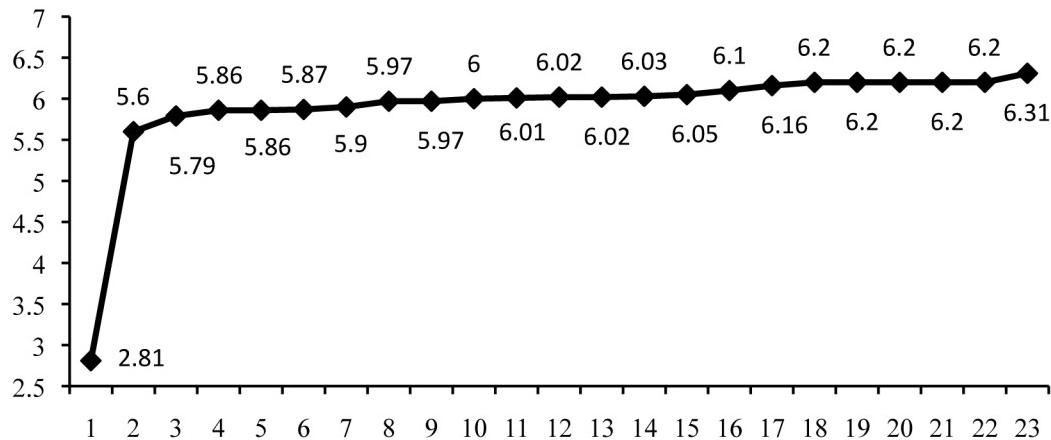
In a sample of seventeen specimens, the weights ranged between 5.72 and 6.38 grams, with a median of 6 grams, a mode of 5.9 grams, and an average weight of 6.07 grams strongly suggests an intended weight standard of about 6 grams (92.5 grains). Like Wood 11, the weights are very consistent, implying a minting operation that used some care to maintain the weight of its products.

**Wood 13****Wood 14**

Metrological data were obtained for twenty-three specimens of this variety. The weights ranged from 2.81 to 6.31 grams, with a median of 6.02 grams, a mode of 6.2 grams, and an average weight of 5.88 grams. An intended weight standard of about 6 grams (92.5 grains) seems most probable.



Wood 14

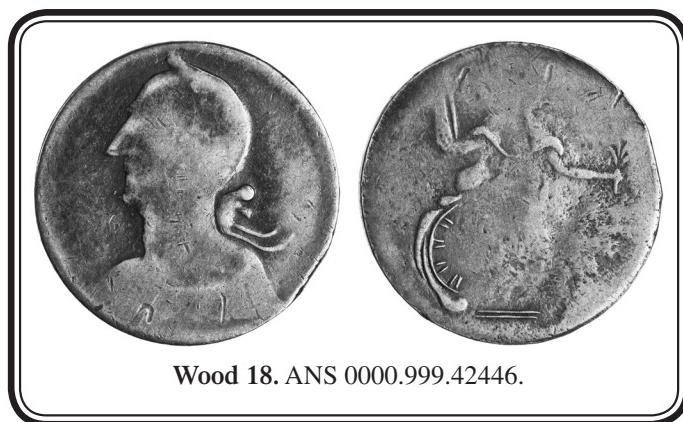


Wood 15–17

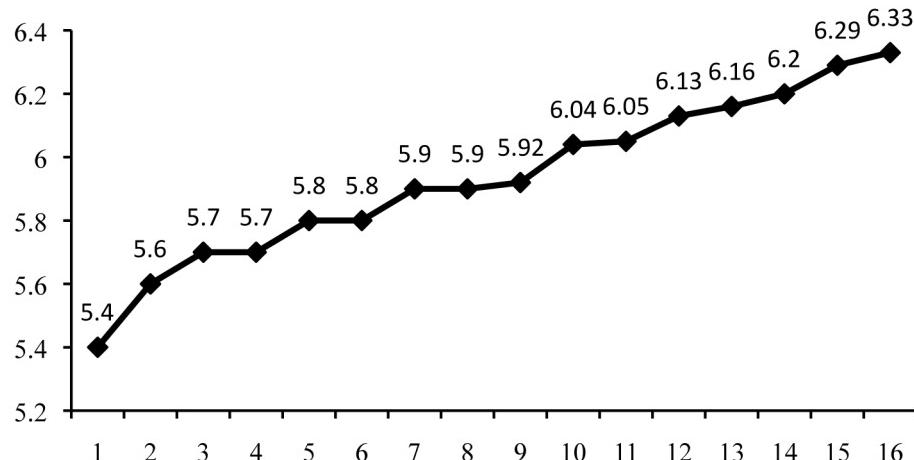
No weights were obtained for Wood 15 and the limited data for Wood 16 (6.02, 6.07, 6.28, 6.59 grams) and Wood 17 (6.13 grams) make it impossible to draw conclusions regarding these varieties, although a target weight in the neighborhood of 6 grams (92.5 grains) seems likely for Wood 16.

Wood 18

In a sample of sixteen specimens for this variety the weights ranged from 5.4 to 6.33 grams, with a median of 5.9 grams, a mode of 5.9 grams, and an average weight of 5.93 grams. These numbers again suggest production with an eye to a target weight of roughly 6 grams (92.5 grains).



Wood 18

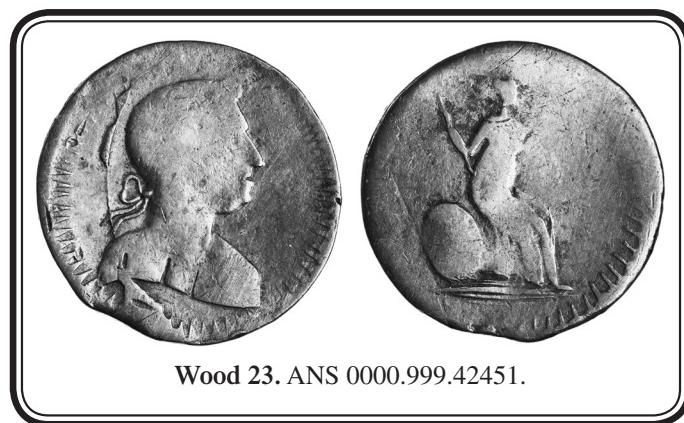


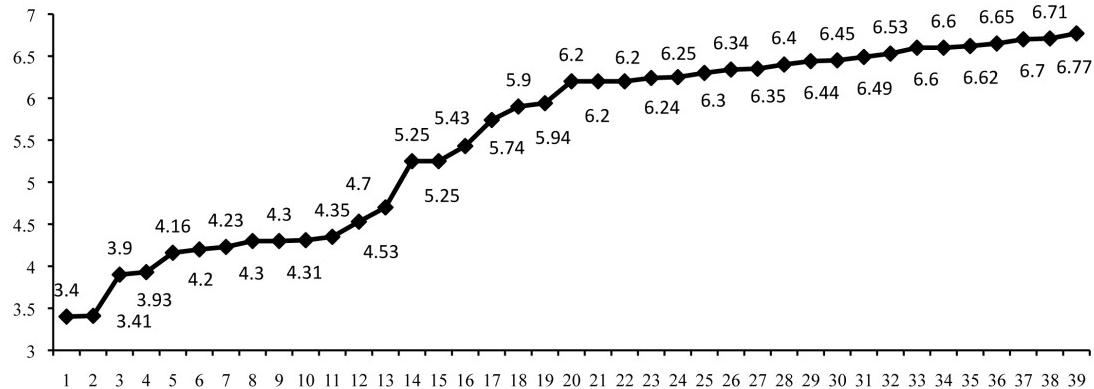
Wood 19–22

There were not enough data for Wood 19 (4.09, 4.84, 5.52, 6.83 grams) and none at all for Wood 20, Wood 21, and Wood 22 with which to suggest the intended weight standard for these varieties.

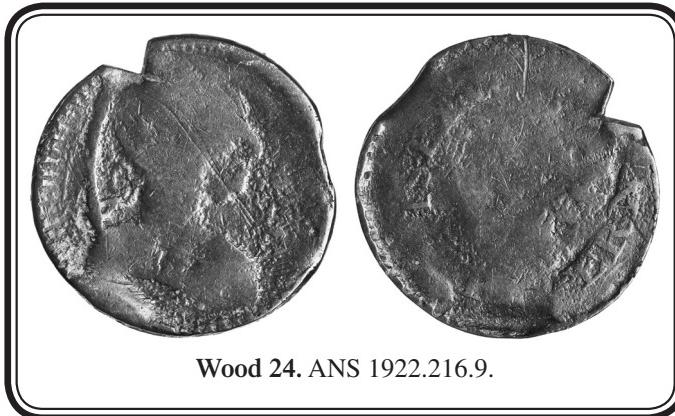
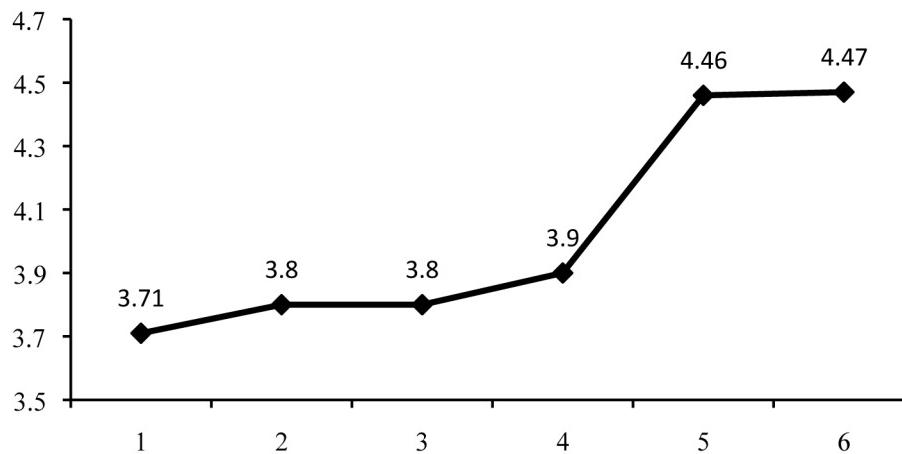
Wood 23

In a sample of thirty-nine specimens for this variety, the weights ranged from 3.4 to 6.77 grams, with a median of 6.2 grams, a mode of 6.2 grams, and an average weight of 5.54 grams. Unlike the other varieties analyzed, the chart for Wood 23 indicates two weight clusters: one between 4.16 and 4.7 grams and another larger cluster between 6.2 and 6.77 grams. These two groups seem to suggest two periods of production. In one, probably earlier period the coppers were struck to a standard of roughly 6.5 grams (100.3 grains), but in another, probably later period they were produced with an intended weight of about 4.4 grams (67.9 grains). Since Wood 23 was struck with two die orientations (medal and coin turn) it would be interesting to know whether the orientations coincide with the different weight groups.



Wood 23**Wood 24**

The weight data for this variety are very limited. Six specimens ranging in weight from 3.71 to 4.47 grams had a median of 3.8 grams, a mode of 3.8 grams, and an average weight of 4.02 grams. Based on these numbers one tends to suspect that the minting operation was aiming for a target weight of about 4 grams (61.7 grains), although 4.4 grams (67.9 grains) also seems possible.

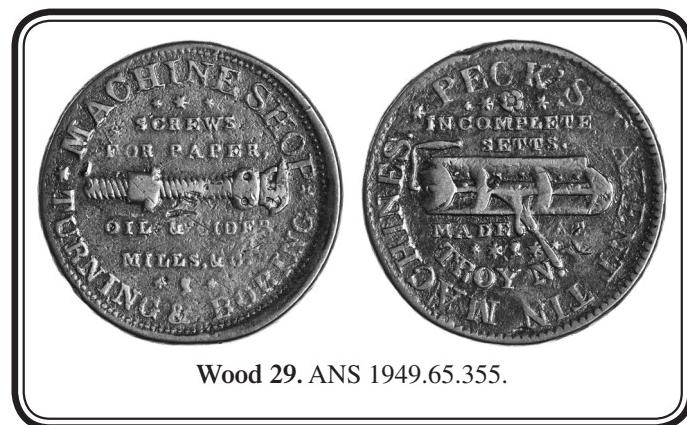
**Wood 24**

Wood 25–28

The data for Wood 25 (2.7, 3.11, 3.32 grams), Wood 26 (3.33 grams), Wood 27 (none), and Wood 28 (none) were too limited to offer any suggestion regarding the probable intended weights for these varieties.

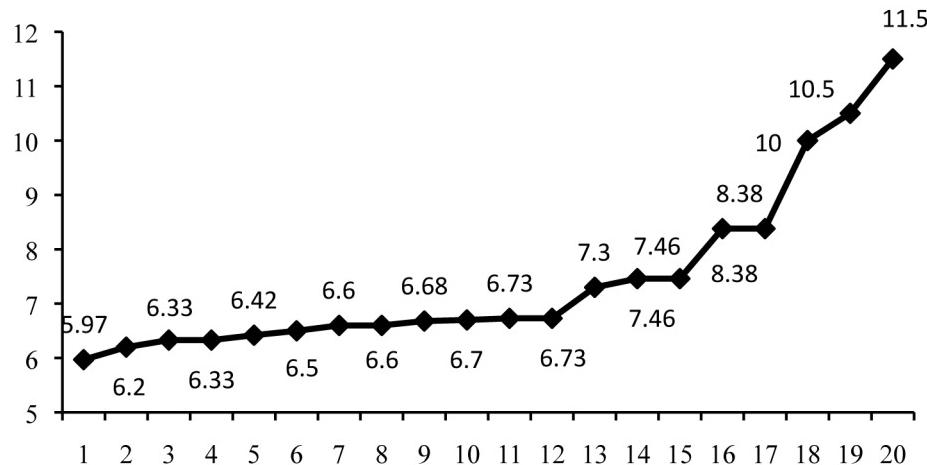
Wood 29

The weights ranged between 5.97 and 11.5 grams in a sample of twenty specimens of Wood 29 (not technically a Blacksmith copper, but connected to the main series by shared dies). The median for this group was 6.7 grams, the mode was 6.7 grams, and the average weight was 7.43 grams. The clear clustering between 6.2 and 6.73 grams makes it seem likely that the intended weight standard for this variety was in the neighborhood of 6.7 grams, although the relatively large number (8 coppers or 40% of the sample) of specimens with weights between 7.3 and 11.5 grams may perhaps suggest a second group struck to a poorly regulated higher standard.



Wood 29. ANS 1949.65.355.

Wood 29



Wood 30–46

In the sample group there was no weight information available for the rare varieties Wood 30, 31, 35, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45, and 46. The data were extremely limited for Wood 32 (6.41 and 5.97 grams), Wood 34 (4.92 grams), Wood 36 (6.19 grams), Wood 39 (7.46 grams), and Wood 43 (6.53 grams), making it impossible to establish the probable target weights for these varieties.

The common and controversial Wood 33 variety has been excluded from this study on the grounds that its metrology has been discussed already at length in a previous issue of *The*

Colonial Newsletter and that it was most probably imported from England and not produced in North America.¹

Observations

This preliminary study reveals a few interesting facts about the Blacksmith coppers as catalogued by Wood that have not been recognized previously. There is often a perception that the production of the coppers was as crude as the devices struck on them, with little attention paid to important details like consistency of weight. However, it seems clear from the present study that the mint operations responsible for the Blacksmith coppers actually did aim for particular weight standards (all admittedly lower than official British copper coins of the period). The table below groups the Wood varieties by their apparent target weights:

7.7 grams	6.5–6.7 grams	6 grams	5.4–5.7 grams	4.4–4.8 grams
Wood 1	Wood 23	Wood 2	Wood 6	Wood 5
	Wood 29	Wood 3	Wood 11	Wood 12
		Wood 4		Wood 23
		Wood 13		
		Wood 14		

There seem to be three main standards: a heavy one of about 7.7 grams (118.8 grains), a middle one of about 6 grams (92.5 grains), and a light one falling between 4.4 and 4.8 grams (67.9 and 74 grains).

The standard of Wood 23 and Wood 29, which falls between 6.5 and 6.7 grams (100.3 and 103.4 grains), seems to be based on that of the contemporary United States' half cent. The version of this denomination with a lettered edge was authorized at 104 grains (6.74 grams) on January 14, 1793. A half cent with a plain edge was subsequently authorized at 84 grains (5.44 grams) on December 27, 1795. The apparent use of a U.S. standard for these varieties is perhaps not especially surprising considering that some of the dies for these varieties are connected to the American die-makers, Daniel and Benjamin True, who operated in Troy, New York, in the 1830s.² While it is usually asserted that Wood 23 and Wood 29, along with the associated varieties Wood 24-28 and Wood 30 were purposely produced for export to Lower Canada (the modern province of Quebec), the standard and the use of an eagle device on Wood 26, Wood 28, and Wood 30 might tend to suggest an intended American, rather than a Canadian context. Also supporting this view is the assured late production of Wood 26-28. These muled varieties all share a store card die advertising "Peck's Patent Tin Machines." Since the U.S. Patent Office issued the patent (no. 3061) for these machines to O. and N. Peck on April 25, 1843, the die could not have been produced before this date. This seems rather late for intended use in Lower Canada. By 1837, the circulation of underweight copper tokens in the province had become so problematic that the banks refused to accept them and began to produce their own tokens. These changes essentially brought an end to the Blacksmith coppers in Lower Canada by 1840—at least three years before the Peck's Patent pieces could have been produced.

1 O. Hoover, "Wood 33: An Evasive Copper in North America," CNL 137 (August 2008): 3279–3288. For a dissenting view on the origin of Wood 33, see Jim Biancarosa's article in this issue of *The Colonial Newsletter*.

2 W. K. Cross, *Charlton Standard Catalogue of Canadian Coins and Tokens*, 8th ed. (Toronto, 2013): 229.

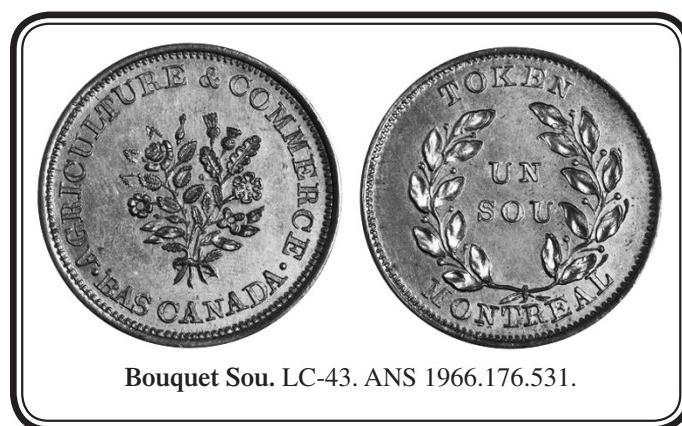
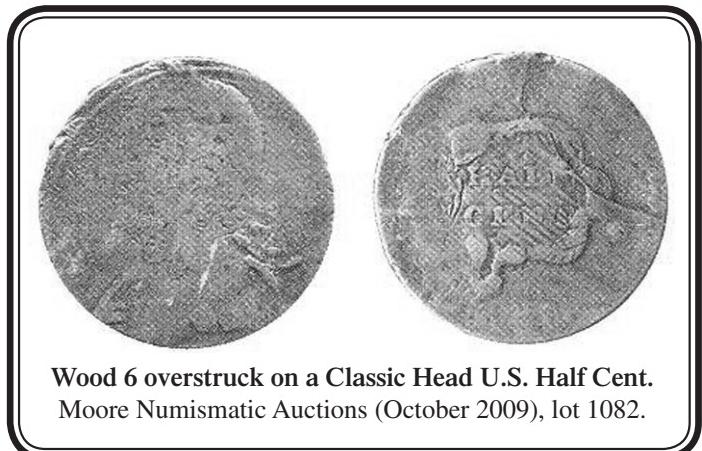
The 5.4–5.7 gram (83.3–87.9 grains) standard of Wood 6 and 11 should probably be folded in with the varieties of the 6 gram standard to which the majority of the Blacksmith varieties belong. Together they may represent another group taking its metrological cue from the United States half cent since their intended weights fall between the 6.7 and 5.4 grams authorized for half cents. This impression is underlined by the existence of an example of Wood 6 overstruck on a Classic head half cent.³

One wonders whether the apparent influence of the U.S. half cent lies behind the prevalence of weights falling between 6.74 and 5.44 grams for halfpenny tokens imported into Lower Canada from England or produced locally in Montreal. Such tokens would have been doubly useful in that they could easily pass (before 1838) in the coin-starved province as very lightweight halfpence, but also had some metrological credibility against the half cent, which, in the early nineteenth century, had not yet driven all old copper coin into the melting pot in the United States or out of the country.⁴ Based on the weights given in Charlton (admittedly with some caveat concerning their reliability), the Montreal 1816 half penny (LC-12), the 1830 and 1840 Canada halfpence (LC-13), the Francis Mullins commerce token (LC-17), thin-flan J. Roy tokens (LC-20), some Montreal bouquet sous (LC-23, LC-25, LC-26A and B, LC-27, LC-30, LC-31, LC-40, LC-41, LC-42), Tiffin tokens (LC-48), thin flan RH tokens (LC-51), 1825 trade tokens (LC-53), imitation spread eagle tokens (LC-54B, C, and D), seated justice tokens (LC-55, LC-56, LC-57), bust and harp tokens (LC-60A, B, C, D), Wellington halfpenny tokens (WE-8, WE-9, WE-10), and Waterloo 1815 tokens (WE-14) all seem to aim at this standard. Notwithstanding the dates inscribed on some of them, many of these tokens are known to have circulated in Lower Canada in the late 1830s, making it seem likely that the Blacksmith coppers of similar weight also belong to this period.

The heavy 7.7 gram standard of Wood 1 is in line with the standard employed for Canada halfpenny tokens (LC-14), T. S. Brown tokens (LC-15), R. W. Owen tokens (LC-18), J. Shaw tokens (LC-19), most bouquet sous (LC-21, LC-22, LC-24, LC-28, LC-29, LC-30, LC-32, LC-

³ Misdescribed as a full cent in Charlton. Thanks to Markus Molenda for locating the original sale by Moore Numismatic Auctions.

⁴ For foreign copper coins still circulating in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, see P. Mossman, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation* (New York, 1993): 259 with n. 30.



33, LC-34, LC-35, LC-36, LC-37, LC-38, LC-39, LC-44), and George Ords tokens (LC-61). Since all of these halfpenny tokens circulated in Lower Canada in the period 1824–1838 (most after 1830) it seems reasonable to date Wood 1 to this period and perhaps to suspect that its standard was influenced by that of the popular bouquet sou.

The very light standard of 4.4–4.8 grams (67.9–74 grains) used for Wood 5, Wood 12, and Wood 23 is only comparable to that used for a few series of tokens circulating in Lower Canada. These include the bust design Ships Colonies & Commerce (LC-58) and Commercial Change (LC-59) tokens, which take the inspiration for their legends and their light weight standard from tokens struck for use in Prince Edward Island between 1830 and 1860. In the early 1860s barrels of the tokens were smuggled from PEI to Newfoundland in order to make a profit from the higher standard for copper tokens regularly employed there.



PEI Ships Colonies & Commerce token. Courtesy of coinsandcanada.com.

The evidence for weight standards adduced here is important for our understanding of the Blacksmith series in several ways:

- 1) It suggests that all of the Blacksmith varieties discussed here probably belong to the 1830s or later (and therefore their treatment is completely out of place in a journal devoted to coins and money related to North America before 1793!)
- 2) It indicates a greater attention to weight standards than has been recognized previously and that these standards seem to correspond to those used by other token series circulating in Lower Canada;
- 3) It raises the possibility that the Blacksmith standards may have been influenced by those of important regional copper issues (U.S. half cent, bouquet sou, and PEI Ships Colonies & Commerce token), which in turn seems to indicate that even when tokens were imported from England, decisions regarding the weight standards were being made by the importers in Lower Canada;
- 4) The large group of Blacksmith coppers with weight standards compatible with the U.S. half cent—one of which was actually overstruck on a half cent host coin—strongly implies North American production, which has sometimes been doubted.⁵
- 5) The weight standards may reflect regional requirements. For example, one might envision Blacksmith coppers roughly on the standard of the U.S. half cent to be produced in or for regions of Lower Canada (i.e., Montreal) closely engaged in trade with the United States, while

⁵ For the view that the majority of Blacksmith coppers were produced by "the token and button manufacturers of England...and which probably initiated the notion of the 'Blacksmiths' origin as Canadian/North American," see W. T. Anton, Jr. and B. Kesse, *Forgotten Coins of the North American Colonies* (Krause, 1992): 15.

one might expect those close to the light standard of PEI to have seen use in eastern Lower Canada, which was in close proximity to both Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

